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Thesis

NATURE OF THE APPEAL OF THE EIGHTH-CENTURY PROPHETS

by

Joshua Obadiah Williams
(A.B., Wiley College, 1931)

submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

1933

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INTRODUCTION

> As long as the world lasts, all who want to make progress in righteousness will come to Israel for inspiration, as to the people who have had the sense for righteousness more glowing and strongest; and in hearing and reading the words Israel has uttered for us, carers for conduct will find a glow and a force they could find nowhere else. As well imagine a man with a sense for sculpture not cultivating it by the remains of Greek art, or a man with a sense for poetry not cultivating it by the help of Homer and Shakespere, as a man with a sense for conduct not cultivating it by the help of the Bible!
>
> Matthew Arnold.

It is the purpose of this study to determine the nature of the appeal of four men who helped to make the religion of Israel the source of religious inspiration: Amos, Hosea, Isaiah and Micah.

With the rise of literary prophecy about 750 B.C., the seers and the ecstatic non-literary prophet gradually disappear from the pages of the Bible. These literary prophets expressed their messages in verse and their poems are some of the most beautiful in all antiquity. They proclaimed a new morality as one after the other contributed those things which go to make up the best in our present-day civilization. We shall see from our study that the eighth-century was one of the most significant periods in the history of the religion of Israel. Four great personalities came out of this period: Amos, Hosea, Isaiah and Micah. To moralize and purify the conception of God was the task of these men.

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We shall attempt in solving our problem, The Appeal of the Prophets, to determine what is meant by prophetic appeal, and to answer two important questions: What did the eighth century prophets appeal with? what did they appeal to? What great spiritual swords did they use in their battle for Jehovah? what was the nature of their attack?

Having found this solution, we shall attempt to interpret it in the light of our present day. Are there not lessons that we as preachers may today learn from the messages of these men?

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CHAPTER I

NATURE AND ESSENTIAL CHARACTER OF HEBREW PROPHECY

Before we enter into our study of "The Appeal of the Eighth Century Prophets," let us first determine the nature and essential character of Hebrew prophecy as well as its place in the history of Israel.

Hebrew prophecy originated from beliefs and feelings common to men everywhere, "such as: (1) that there was a supernatural, a God or Gods, on whose will and power the well-being and the destiny of men depended; (2) that these supernatural powers had communion with men and gave them intimations of their will and their purposes; and (3) that these intimations were not given to men indiscriminately, but to certain favored men, who communicated them to others."[1]

What is a prophet? The Hebrew language calls the prophet 'nābhi.' Rather the prophet in an earlier stage was designated Seer. Two terms are used for 'seer', rō'eh and hōzeh, though without difference of sense. There is a possibility that the word 'vision' was connected with 'seer' and used all down the literature for 'prophecy,' the term 'prophecy' (Nebu'ah) connected with prophet being a late word. (Neh.6:12; 9:29; 15:8). The prophet is called the man of God; a man of God. This is the usual name for a prophet in the early days. It is used of Moses, Samuel and David. It is the

[1] Hasting, D.B., P.107

standing designation of the great prophets of Israel, Elijah and Elisha. When the son of the woman in Zarephath, with whom Elijah lived, fell sick and died, she said, "What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? Art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?"[2] The term also calls to mind the moral character of the prophet, and the ethical nature of all prophecy,- the woman said a holy man of God, and an Apostle repeats her words: "For no prophecy ever came by the will of man; but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit."[3]

The prophets are named Servants of Jehovah. This term implies public service. (2 Kings 9:7; 1 Kings 14:8; 18:36).

Again the prophet is called messenger of Jehovah. "Who is blind but my servant or deaf, as my messenger that I send?"[4] As Malachi, Chapter 3:1, states it:

> "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: And the Lord, whom ye seek, will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant, whom ye desire, behold, he cometh, saith Jehovah of hosts."

This word 'messenger' expresses what is exceedingly conspicuous in the prophets, namely, the sense of authority with which they spoke. They felt charged with the message. Using the expression said about Jesus to express the idea: "He spoke as one having authority, and not as one of the scribes."

[2] 1 Kings 17:8
[3] 2 Pet: 1:21
[4] Isa. 42:19

Isa.43:27

The prophet is perhaps also called Interpreter./ "Thy first fathers sinned, and thy interpreters transgressed against me." The prophets were Israel's interpreters, men who interpreted to Israel God's ways.

Sons of the Prophets

"Sons of the prophets" are persons endowed with the spirit of the prophets, and not at all sons of the prophets according to the flesh. Thus the term "Sons of the Prophets" is used by early literature to denote the body of prophets as a whole. When Amos said, "I am not a prophet, nor the son of a prophet," (7:4) he was repudiating the entire prophetic movement of his day, with which he refused to be classified. These sons of the prophets represent the earliest stage in the history of prophecy in Israel. They were gregarious folk, living and working in groups or communities.

Ecstatic Prophecy

The Hebrew word for ecstatic is 'nabi', and the verb used of ecstatic behaviour is a reflexive form of the root from which the noun 'nabi' comes. Ecstacy consisted of a fit or attack which affected the whole body. Sometimes the limbs were stimulated to violent action, a wild leaping and contortions resulted. The vocal organs were sometimes involved, noises and sounds were poured out which might be unrecognizable as human speech. If definite words were uttered they were

often unintelligible.

The description of the conduct of Saul on one occasion will explain how this influence worked. "And he (Saul) stripped off his clothes, and he also prophesied before Samuel and lay down naked all that day and all that night."[5] The spirit of the Lord came upon Sampson, and he rent the lion as he would have rent a kid (Judges 14:6); it came on Saul, and he slew his oxen and sent the fragments throughout Israel, calling to war with Ammon. (1 Sam. 11:6).

That prophecy waited upon music, at least at times, is also seen from the fact that the company of prophets whom Saul met coming down from a high place were equipped with "a psaltery, and a timbrel, and a pipe, and a harp," to the strains of which they were prophesying. (1 Sam.10:5).

Early Prophecy

The prophets were endowed with a distinctively remarkable insight into the relation of God to the political and social events of their day. They were conscious that they were intermediaries between Yahweh and the nation of Israel. The prophet was God's spokesman. He was extremely sensitive to the will and purpose of God in the world. It was his duty to reveal that will and purpose to men, and to interpret that will in the light and circumstances of his day. He was concerned and spoke much about the future, yet his greatest concern was

[5] 1 Sam.19: 19-24

with the present. As he looked about him with his keen spiritual and moral insight, observing the social injustices and failures of the will of God to operate in the lives of men, he was stirred to indignation. "The prophets," says Thorn,[6] "were inspired with an intense and consuming passion for righteousness. It was this that clearly compelled them to face bitter opposition, cruel punishment, and in some cases even martyrdom." When it looked as though the nation would be lost in the chaos of sin, they came forward to protest against all types of immoral and superstitious religion and to plead for sincerity and reality.

Hebrew prophecy was a recognized institution in Israel. In order for us to gleam a vision of its importance, let us listen to the testimonies of several Old Testament scholars. Knudson says,[7] that "prophecy is the supreme gift of Israel to the world. There is nothing comparable to it in the religious history of mankind. Nowhere do we find a succession of men extending over several centuries of time, who entertained such lofty conceptions of religion, devoting themselves with such passion and power to the realization of these conceptions, and contributed so much to the permanent moralization and spiritualization of religion as did the prophets of Israel. These men occupy a unique place in religious history. To them more than to any other group of men the world is indebted for its richest

[6]Prophets of Israel, P.23; [7]Beacon Lights of Prophecy, P.1.

and noblest spiritual treasure."[8] Thorn speaks of it as "the most remarkable and profound movement the human spirit has ever known: history can show no parallel to it. Though limited to a comparatively brief period and confined to an insignificant corner of the world, it has proved to be one of the most influential factors moulding the character and destiny of mankind." Speaking as though the pathway to God had become quite difficult, Buttenwieser says,[9] "Prophecy became men's pathfinder in their search after the truth, after the knowledge of God; and it is in this sphere, a sphere of the spiritual, that Israel attained imperishable fame."

Thus we see that prophecy was an established order similar to that of the priesthood. To the prophets the people went for instruction and guidance both in public and private affairs. (Jer.18:18; Ezek.7:26). It presented to the world such a lofty conception of God and such a wonderful philosophy of life and history which made such a permanent and powerful appeal to the human heart and intellect that it carried with it the conviction that it came not from man but from God. Without the prophets the life of Israel would have become as stagnant as a pool that ceases to flow, and religious life would have congealed into custom. They broke the icy surface of social and religious formalism and kept the stream of spiritual life flowing on into a larger and fuller stream.

[8]The Prophets of Israel, P.13; [9]The Prophets of Israel, P.5.

Hebrew prophecy represented the conviction that the course of history was in the hand of God, who had a purpose and a plan for his people. It, therefore, sought with all its power to lead the people and the leaders to follow in the path indicated by the prophets. Prophecy's predominant interest from the start was in the progress of the community or nation, rather than in that of the individual. Individuals were of significance only insofar as they vitally affected the life of the people as a whole. It was in later years when prophecy was addressed to individuals.

Significance of Eighth Century in the Religion of Israel

The 'golden age' of prophecy began in the eighth century B.C., when such men as Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah made their literary prophetic contribution to the religious history of Israel.

Why written prophecy originated in the eighth century before Christ is a question to which different answers have been given. Dean Knudson says[10] that some ascribe it to the literary tendency of the age. Others attribute it to the failure of the prophets to accomplish what they desired by the spoken word. Even today with our multitude of great preachers in America, how much change in the social order would they be able to make without the help of the church press? Each has its importance. We must remember, however, that the prophetic

[10] Beacon Lights of Prophecy, P.19.

activity itself was not essentially different in these men from what had been the case of their predecessors. "That they reduced their sermons to writing was simply incidental to their ministry," says Knudson[11], "but it proved to be a very important incident. No single fact connected with the development of prophecy was more significant for the future of religion in Israel." The great question at issue in the time of Elijah was whether Jehovah, and he alone, was to be worshipped in Israel. The problem, on the other hand, with which the literary prophets deal is the question how he is to be worshipped. It was the prophets of the eighth century B.C. who gave to Israel in written form the moral and ethical requirements of Jehovah.

These prophets brought something new to the religious field that exalted them above their predecessors and gave them a special place of significance. They were attached to the past, but at the same time a new step forward was made because of their teachings. This forward step did not consist so much in the introduction of new ideas as in the ethical and clearer definition of ideas and convictions already present. The ideas of the power of God, the ethical character of true religion, and monotheism were not new, but the eighth century prophets gave them a clearness of expression, a depth of interpretation, and a wideness of application that had been unknown before. Consequently, we have in the work of the eighth century prophets "a notable advance in the direction of a complete release of

[11] Beacon Lights of Prophecy, P.20.

Israelitic religion from national entanglements and its preparation for a world-wide mission. Literary prophecy simply voiced the true piety of the past, brought it to its self-consciousness, and gave it clearness of expression. It was merely the logical outcome of that higher faith which had been current in Israel from the time of Moses down."[12] The appearance of the literary prophets marks the most important epoch in Israel's history next to that of Moses.

Thus, the eighth century B.C. has special importance in the history of Israel; for it was that century that gave to the world the prophecy of Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah.

[12]Knudson, Beacon Lights of Prophecy, P.25.

CHAPTER II

THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE FOUR BOOKS

1. Amos

The authenticity of the writing which bears the name of Amos has never been seriously questioned. There are beliefs, however, that certain parts of the book are later additions. There is a question whether Amos 9:8c-15 represents the genuine teaching of the prophet, or whether it is a later addition to the book. This question is of considerable importance. Cripps says,[1] "there are grave, insuperable difficulties in holding the view that the book is an entire unity." Sellin[2] states that this portion shows that later hands have been at work upon the book. The standard of judgment which Amos implies in the preceding part of the book conflicts decidedly with Amos' expectation regarding the future of Judah. He further states that the objection which has been taken to this portion is invalid. Amos could have easily spoken these words after 9:1-4, but all objections vanish as soon as we realize that they formerly stood immediately after 7:10-17, that is, we have here a continuation of the prophecy of judgment against Amaziah. The glorious future of Judah signifies for Amaziah as for all Northern Israel, a crushing condemnation. This promise does not destroy the force of Amos' exhortations to repentance any more than 3:14 and 9:7 exclude one another. This is a defense for the authorship belonging to Amos. Harper thinks that this

[1] Amos, P.67; [2] Introduction to Old Testament, P.169

portion was an insertion made in the spirit of the days of Zechariah and Zerubbabel, when men were thinking of the restoration of the throne of David.

Dr. Leslie has given the arguments on both sides for this portion. The arguments in favor of Amos writing 9:8c-15 are:

1. It is a mistake to demand of the prophets continuity of thought. (See Century Bible, P.173).

2. It was customary among Egyptian Seers to combine prophecy of Doom and Hope.

3. The Pre-exilic prophets were not only preachers of repentance but encouraged faith as well. (Ch.5:4-6; 14; 7:2-5).

The arguments against Amos being the author are:

1. The picture of restoration seems to be inconsistent with Amos' condemnation. (ch.5:1-2; 9:1-4; 9:8a).

2. A favorable attitude toward Judah as distinct from Israel is not characteristic of Amos.

3. Emphasis of material blessings separated from moral character is inconsistent with the ethical attitude of Amos.

4. The interpretation of the phrase, "Tabernacle of David." What does "fallen tabernacle" mean? Some have thought that it meant a divided kingdom. On the other hand it might mean the future ruin of the Davidic kingdom. This would be then a prophetic future.

5. Hostility to Edom is a Post-Exilic thought.

In the estimation of the writer the objections to attributing these verses to Amos seem to outweigh those in favor. The message of Amos was one of absolute destruction and such a conclusion is quite incongruous with the main body

of the prophecy. Without this insertion it is easy to understand the message of Amos. The book may be divided into three parts: 1. A series of judgment oracles (1:3-2; 16);
2. A series of judgment sermons (3:1-6: 14);
3. A series of judgment visions (7:1-9:8a).

We shall accept these as the authentic portion of the Book of Amos.

2. Hosea

The Book of Hosea is divided into two main divisions:- Chapters 1-3; 4-14. The section which ends with the conclusion of the third chapter is independent of the rest of the book. Crafer says[3] that the book was formerly accepted by all as coming from Hosea himself, his utterances having been compiled by his own hand near the close of his life. But modern criticism has changed this view, and editors have made Hosea say just as much as they think he ought to have said, and no more, by the theory that the book was compiled at a much later date and is full of glosses and interpolations which date from the exile and after it.

Harper says[4] the corrupt state of the text of Hosea makes the study of its literary problems difficult and unsatisfactory. The mention of Judah in 1:17; 5:13; 6:11; 8:14 and 10:11 is clearly foreign to the original connection, and consequently of secondary origin. Harper goes on to state that this mention of Judah is due to the work of a Judaistic editor.

[3]Hosea, P.19
[4]Amos and Hosea, P.CLIX

But whether the same should be said of ~~4:15~~ 4:15; 6:4 is highly questionable to Sellin;[5] and in 5:10-6:3 if the "Judah" is removed all possibility of rightly understanding the passage disappears. All these passages are struck out by Marti, Volz and others on the ground that they contain promises. With them go 1:10-2:1,13b-23; 3:1-5; 5:15-6.3,5b; 11:8-11; 12:6; 14:1-9.

The passages that may be called declarations referring to Israel's future are rejected by Harper. He thinks the prophet plainly represents Israel's ruin as close at hand. These passages of hope are entirely inconsistent with Hosea's point of view, and directly contradict the representations which are fundamental in his preaching; nor can it be shown that they are spoken, either, to a different audience or at a later time in Hosea's ministry. Besides, they interrupt the logical development or the thought in particular passages, and show a definite connection with the thought of later prophecy. This material is unquestionably from exilic times.

We agree with Sellin when he says[6] this whole criticism rests on completely false premises. The expectation of deliverance is no new spiritual invention of the prophets, but a tradition which they inherited (cf Amos 5:18 ect) and therefore the argument that it conflicts with the threatenings of disaster is not genuine. It is wholly impossible to deny that Hosea in his first period cherish the hope of a spiritual

5,6 Introduction to Old Testament, P.161

rebirth of his people, and thought of the judgment as of a purifying character, yet it might be argued that the compiler of the book for literary reasons took sayings from this period and inserted them at the end, thus giving a false impression that these were the last words of his public ministry.

Harper argues that Gomer was only brought back for the purpose of being secluded from temptation, and that there was no intention on the part of Hosea to restore her to her position as his wife. We agree with Melville Scott when he says[7] this seems inadmissible. What was the purpose of this temporary seclusion if it were not to lead to eventual restoration? If this supposition makes the whole transaction inconceivable, it also robs the application of the history to Israel of all its cogency. The sin of Gomer and the sin of Israel were one and the same. We agree that this hope of restoration is genuine.

"There has been a growing tendency on the part of the most recent writers to deal with the fourteenth chapter of Hosea as with Amos 9:8 -15, that is, to assign it to a later age than that of Hosea.[8] Scott says[9] this remark should be read with discernment, since it is an admission that this opinion is by no means universally accepted even among the more advanced critics. George A. Smith says, "There is, in short, no phrase or illusion on which we can say that it is alien to

[7]The Message of Hosea, P.14; [9]The Message of Hosea, P.79
[8]International Critical Commentary, P.408

the prophet's style or environment, while the very keynotes of the book-return, backsliding, idols, the work of our hands, such pity as a father hath, and perhaps even the answer or converse of verse 9, are all struck once more."

The criticism is that "the whole description is wanting in unity; entirely different features are combined one with another."[10] But this chapter is no more diffusive than any other portion of the prophecy of Hosea. One characteristic of the writing of Hosea is that it does not always follow logical sequence. He writes as he feels at the moment. His vision is either bright with sunshine, or black with doubt. In dealing with such a prophet whose emotions influenced his speech, ordinary rules of interpretation simply do not stand.

3. Isaiah

The book which bears the name of Isaiah is, as believed by scholars, a collection of prophetic oracles, showing traces of composite authorship. Wade says, "It reached its present shape by a lengthy process, its compilation being effected by various stages; and the completion of it was not accomplished until many centuries after Isaiah's lifetime."[11] Sellin, on the other hand, thinks that the book was not written as a single whole by Isaiah himself, but has grown up gradually from the combination of separate sayings, discourses and poems of Isaiah, or of a collection of Isaiah's prophecies. That in the case of

[10] I.C.C. P.253; [11] The Book of the Prophet Isaiah, P.I

a compilation of this kind arranged by later hands, some non-Isaian material might easily find its way into the construction.

The following portions have been given by Sellin as having stood the test of criticism and have been generally admitted as being from the hand of Isaiah: 1-12; 14:24-20: 6; 22; (23:1-14?); 28-33. Yet, many recent critics have denied the Isaian authorship of a number of the sections noted above. Such sections as: 2:2-4; 4:2-6; 9:2-7; 11:1-10; 15; 16; 19; 23; 32-33. Stade, Hackmann, Marti, and Duhm have lead in this non acceptance.

The Certainly Non-Authentic Parts of the Book

1. A Prophecy against Babylon - 13:1-14; 23.

That this cannot be derived from Isaiah himself is now admitted by practically all critics. The decisive arguments have been summed up by Sellin in his "Introduction to the Old Testament," PP.135 as follows:

(a) Babylon is not here announced as the future enemy of Judah; it is taken for granted that she already is so, v.2ff; which was not possible in Isaiah's day.

(b) While in Isa.1-12 Exile in Babylon is not so much as mentioned, here it is not merely threatened as something in the future, but it is announced that its end is approaching - the Fall of Babylon on the one hand, 19ff., the Return of the Jews on the other, 14:7ff.

(c) The Medes, who lay outside the historical horizon of Isaiah, are definitely named as the destroyers of Babylon; indeed the author even had some knowledge of their characteristics, 13:17. Hence it is certain that this writing took place in the closing period of the Babylonian Exile.

2. Oracle against Babylon, Oracles upon Edom and the Arabians, 21.

"Verses 1-10 are non-genuine on the same grounds as Chapter 13. The oracle upon Edom, verse 11ff., is not an oracle at all but nothing more or less than a refusal to give one, clothed in a current form of answer given by a watchman to the question 'how goes the night'?" And in the "utterance about the Arabians. Verses 13-41 a Bedouin song, which was likewise previously current, had been transformed into a prophecy against Kedar."[12]

The mention of Elam (Persia) and Media appeared to point to the attack upon Babylon by Cyrus, B.C.538, as the occasion of the prophecy; and as no intelligible purpose would be subserved by Isaiah's announcing to the generation of Hezekiah an occurrence lying nearly 200 years in the future, and having no bearing upon contemporary interests, critics suppose it to be the work of an author living toward the close of the Babylonian captivity. This view is adopted by Sellin, Harper, and Duhm.

Chapters 24-27

"Modern critics agree generally in the opinion that this prophecy is not Isaiah's and (chiefly) for the following reasons:- 1. It lacks a suitable occasion in Isaiah's age.
2. The literary treatment (in spite of certain phraseological points of contact with Isaiah) is in many respects unlike Isaiah's.
3. There are features in the representation and contents of the prophecy which seems to spring

12 Sellin, I.O.T., P.136.

out of a different and later vein of thought from Isaiah's." [13]

Chapters 34-35

Sellin dates these chapters in the post-Exilic period. Driver does not give credit to Isaiah for them because the literary style is not that of Isaiah's.

Chapters 36-39

"The original place of these narratives was not the Book of Isaiah, but the Book of Kings, whence they were excerpted (with slight abridgment) by the compiler of the Book of Isaiah." Isaiah is always spoken of in the third person, and 37, 38 can not have been written until after Sennacherib's death.(687 B.C.

Authorship of Chapters 40-66

Driver says[14] there are three independent lines of argument which converge to show that this prophecy is not the work of Isaiah; like 13:2-14; 23, it has for its author a prophet writing towards the close of the Babylonian captivity.

(1) The internal evidence supplied by the prophecy itself points to this period as that at which it was written. It alludes repeatedly to Jerusalem as ruined and deserted. (44:26b; 58; 12; 61:4; 64:4; 63:18; 63:10f). Those whom the prophet addresses are addressed in person- arguing with them, appealing to them (40:21,26,28; 43:10; 48:8; 50:10f; 51:6,12f; 58:8ff) This constitutes the strongest possible presumption that the author lived in the period which he thus describes. To Isaiah this period was yet unborn.

(2) The argument derived from the historic function of prophecy is confirmed by the literary style of chapters 40-66, which is very different from that of Isaiah.

[13] Driver, Lit. of the Old Testament, P.220; [14] P.241f

Isaiah's style is terse and compact; the movement of his periods is stately and measured; his rhetoric is grave and restraining. In these chapters a subject is often developed at considerable length; the style is much more flowing; the rhetoric is warm and impassioned; and the prophet often bursts out into a lyric strain in a manner to which even Isaiah 12 affords no parallel.

(3) The so-called Trito-Isaian Book, 56-66. These chapters used always to be immediately connected with Deutero-Isaiah. We are indebted to Duhm for pointing out that there is a deep division after Chapter 55. After 55:13 there is no further mention of the Return from Babylon, that the whole book, 55-66, points to Jerusalem. Duhm therefore ascribed these chapters to a Trito-Isaiah, to be distinguished from Deutero-Isaiah, who wrote shortly before the advent of Ezra and Nehemiah.

4. Micah

The whole book was ascribed to Micah until the middle of the nineteenth century. Most modern commentators, following in the footsteps of Ewald, deny more or less extensive portions of the book to the eighth century prophet. Ewald assigned Chapters 6,7 to the days of Manasseh. He denied the two chapters to Micah on the following grounds:

(1) Chapters 1 to 5 are complete in themselves;
(2) the style is different;
(3) the artistic form is different;
(4) the historical background is different.

Four recent writers may be quoted as representatives of modern critical opinion. Cheyne declared: "One result is that in no part of Chapters 4 to 7 can we venture to detect the hand of Micah. What the real Micah was must be learned from Chapters 1 to 3, which are most genuine." Nowack unhesitatingly ascribes to Micah Chapters 1 to 3, with the possible exception of 2:12-13. "If there are any words of Micah at all in chap-

ters 4,5, these can include no more than 4:9,10,14; 5:9-13." Marti assigns to the eighth century prophet Micah, only 1:5b, 6,8,9,16; 2:1-3,4,6-11; 3:1,2a,3a,4,5a,2b,5b,8,9,10. He thinks these passages were arranged in the order given which constituted the Micah book known in the days of Jeremiah. J.M.P. Smith sums up his position regarding Chapters 4,5, in these sentences:-

> "The arguments of Stade against Micah's authorship seems irrefutable, except possibly in the case of 4:14; 5:9-12.... Furthermore, it is impossible to regard the chapters as a unit in themselves; the attitude toward the heathen world, for example, is wholly different in 4:12,13 from that in 4:1-4, nor is the view of the Messianic age in 5:4,5 consistent with that in 5:1-3. But Stade's division of the material between two sources cannot stand. Glosses are represented by 4:4,5; 5:2,13,14; 4:1-4 stands alone; 4:11-13 and 5:6-8 reflect the same background and breathe the same spirit; the remaining sections have no close affinity with any of the preceding or with one another. The chapters thus seem to contain a miscellaneous collection of fragments gathered up from various sources, and having little in common other than a hopeful outlook for the future."[15]

The same writer states his conclusions regarding Chapters 6 and 7 in these words:-

> "There is no logical unity within Chapters 6 and 7; they resolve themselves into seven sections, no one of which connects closely with either its preceding or its following sections. The possibility of Micah's authorship remains open for 6:9-16 and 7:1-6, but is wholly excluded for the remainder. These two sections, together with 6:1-5, might be placed in any period of Hebrew history subsequent to the appearance of the great prophets. 6:6-8 seems to reflect the wisdom of the sages and to belong to the earlier half of the postexilic age. 7:7-10 and 7:14-20 come apparently both out of the same conditions; Israel is suffering but hoping, looking back with longing upon the good old days and praying for vengeance; they are best located in the later postexilic period, after the work of Nehemiah and

[15] Micah, P.12

> Ezra. 7:13-13, however, is wholly detached from its context and is to be explained as coming from the period after the fall of Jerusalem, but before the rebuilding of the city walls. The two chapters thus seem to be a collection of miscellaneous fragments, coming from widely scattered periods and from at least four different authors."[16]

Modern opinion regarding the origin of 7:7-20 is practically unanimous in favor of the late date. Wellhausen says: "Between 7:6 and 7:7 there yawns a century." Nowack is equally emphatic: "7:7ff cannot possibly be attributed to Micah." Marti and Stade assign the sections to the second century B.C. G.A.Smith calls 7:7-20 "a canto of several fragments, from periods far apart in the history of Israel." On the basis of the preceding discussion, Eiselen believes the following conclusion to be warranted:

(1) There is insufficient reason for questioning Micah's authorship of 1:2-16; 2:1-11; 3:1-12; 4:9,10; 5:1,1-10-14.

(2) The closing section 7:7-20, does not come from Micah; it may be in the language of G.A.Smith "a canto of several fragments, from periods farapart in the history of Israel."

We accept this argument in the solution of our problem. We also believe with Eiselen that there is not enough reason to take from Micah the authorship of 6:1-7: 6. "True, the conditions reflected in these verses are not the same as those presupposed in Chapters 1 to 3, but if the testimony of the title in 1:1 can at all be relied upon the prophet lived through a period during which political as well as moral and social changes were frequent. If we assume that the utterances in

[16]Micah, PP.15,16

6:1 to 7: 6 come from a time when corruption was especially widespread, the depth of feeling is easily accounted for; the more intense feeling would inspire more earnest and passionate appeals, which, in turn, would influence language and style."[17] With J.M.P.Smith we do not believe Chapters 4 and 5 were written by Micah.

[17] Eiselen, Prophetic Books of the Old Testament, P.483

CHAPTER III

AMOS

Amos is the first of the literary prophets of the Old Testament; thus we may rightly call him the father of Hebrew Prophecy so far as it takes the form of literature.

"Amos, the first of the literary prophets, is also one of the greatest. Moses may be more tender, Isaiah more serenely majestic, Jeremiah more passionately human; but Amos has a certain titanic strength and rugged grandeur all his own," says McFadyen.[1]

According to the opinion of Dr. Knudson,[2] much of the distinction Amos now enjoys is due to the work of the critics. It is they who have given him his present exalted position in biblical history. A century ago he was simply one of the minor prophets. He was not regarded as original in thought, and his style was supposed to be that of a rustic, lacking in refinement. But observe what the pillars of the Old Testament scholarship now say of him. "The book of Amos," says Cheyne, "forms a literary as well as a prophetic phenomenon." "To the unprejudiced judgment," says W. Robertson Smith, "the prophecy of Amos appears one of the best examples of Hebrew style. The language, the images, the grouping are alike admirable; and the simplicity of diction.....is a token, not of rusticity, but of perfect

[1] Introduction to Old Testament, P.188
[2] Beacon Lights of Prophecy, P.56

mastery." "There is nowhere," says Harper, "to be found in the Old Testament an example of a stronger or purer literary style." Driver says, "His language is pure, his style classical and refined."

More striking still are the testimonies to his importance as a religious teacher. Wellhausen says that he "was the founder of the purest type of a new phase of prophecy." Marti declares that he is "one of the most prominent landmarks in the history of religion." Kuenen speaks of him and his immediate successors as "the creators of ethical monotheism," and Cornill describes him as "one of the most marvelous and incomprehensible figures in the history of the human mind, the pioneer of a process of evolution from which a new epoch of humanity dates."

Although there may be some exaggeration in these estimates, yet Amos was truly a great and significant personality in the religious life of Israel. He represented a forward step in its religious history.

The Times of Amos

It is agreed by most Old Testament scholars that Amos began his prophecy about the year 760 B.C. at the time Israel was divided into two kingdoms. Uzziah ruled over Judah in the South; Jeroboam II governed the Kingdom of the Ten Tribes, with Samaria as its capitol, in the North. Amos belonged to the Southern Kingdom, but when he received the prophetic call it was to Bethel, the royal sanctuary of the North, that he bent

his step.

As a result of the long and vigorous rule of Jeroboam (783-743 B.C.) the wounds of Israel were healed and the nation rapidly recovered its prosperity and luxury. The King and nobles had their summer and winter houses, richly adorned with hewn stone and ivory, and furnished with all the comforts of advancing civilization.[3] In the intoxication of this new-found magnificence, the haughty rulers of Israel forgot the sterner discipline their fathers had undergone and aped the manners of the nations around them, reclining on softly cushioned divans and tasting with fastidious tooth "lambs from the flock and calves from the midst of the stall;" anointing themselves with the choicest perfumes and dancing and drinking their bowlfuls of drained wine, singing foolish songs to the twanging of the lyre, and fancying themselves very Davids in skill.[4] The corruption of the courts of Justice was notorious. Justice was bought and sold. Tradesmen were impatient at the interruption of their greedy pursuits of the sacred days.[5] But over against the brilliant debauchery of the court circles rose the dark shadow of poverty, made even deeper by the encroachment of wealth. To further their own pleasure rich men thought little of trampling down the toil-worn laborer, refusing him an honest wage, and for the debt even of "a pair of shoes" selling him into slavery.[6] The ladies of Samaria were almost as heartless

[3] Amos 3:15
[4] Amos 4:4ff
[5] Amos 8:5
[6] Amos 2:6f

and licentious as their lords,[7] while the merchants in the market-place openly exalted knavery into a means of gain.[8] Immorality was practiced without shame.[9] Political leaders, who should have been the protectors and guardians of the people, were the leaders in vice and crime.[10] Those who attempted to reprove the wrongs and uphold the right were despised and abhorred." So far as outward appearance went, religion shared in the general prosperity of the nation. At Bethel the King had erected a 'royal sanctuary,' where the worship of Yahweh was carried through in a stately fashion, under the direct auspices of the crown. The altars were crowded with festive throngs, and tithes and sacrifices offered in lavish abundance.[12]

Religious sanction was even sought for their violence and injustice. They would subvert the cause of the poor, take the bread out of their mouths, and go straightway to worship God in His temple. They would actually lay themselves down before the altar on garments taken in pledge, abandoned to wine and the grossest impurity, in express defiance of the Covenant with their God.[13] The priests who represented the Divine will concerning Israel accepted their worship. To them Yahweh was a gracious God who sought His people's welfare and took supreme delight in their offerings. Under His keeping, therefore, no evil could befall them.

[7] Amos 4:1
[8] " 6:12
[9] " 2:7
[10] " 6:6
[11] Amos 5:10; 7:10-13
[12] " 4:4f
[13] " 2:7f

With this flagrant disregard of all human and divine law there went, strangely enough, a feeling of absolute security and self-righteousness. But the prophet was not deceived by this superficial prosperity and these external religious festivals. He saw beneath the surface of these the dark side of social injustice and moral unrighteousness.

Influence of His Home Life

Of the life of Amos little is known. We note in his book that his home was Tekoa, a town twelve miles south of Jerusalem. His main occupation was that of a shepherd.[14] Tekoa was situated on the top of a high hill twenty-seven hundred feet above the sea, and so offered a commanding view over the desolate region round about. His environment no doubt had its influence on the growing mind of the prophet. It must have given him his lofty ideals and hilltop convictions that guided him in his prophetic appeals.

We are not surprised to find Amos showing himself fearless. The life of an oriental shepherd tends to develop courage. The life of a shepherd was no easy one. He had not only to endure all sorts of weather, but sometimes even to encounter the most ferocious beasts, in the care and defense of his flock. He was ready to meet any danger to which prophetic labors exposed him. No man without courage could have spoken the words that Amos used when he referred to the womanhood of Samaria: "Hear this word, ye cows of Bashan."

[14]Amos 1:1

As an owner of sheep, he had occasion from time to time to visit the great markets of Judah and Israel in order to sell the products of his flock. From such trips into the great commercial centers he returned to the solitudes of his mountain home, his mind filled with new and strange sights and his heart burdened with a heavy load of grief over what he saw.

The surroundings of grey limestone hills around Tekoa, which were of a lonely and desolate region, could not fail to exert a powerful influence on the character and thought of a man like Amos. He was familiar with the sound of the lion's roar as it sprang upon its prey, and he knew what it was to rescue from the savage beast the mangled remains of one of his flock--'two legs or a piece of an ear.' No wonder he was strong and fearless with a certain titanic strength and rugged grandeur all his own."[15] He had lived close to nature and the influences were written deep upon his soul. He knew about lions and bears and the terrors of the wilderness run through his whole message.

His Prophetic Call

Amos did not belong, either by birth or training, to the recognized order of the prophets. He was essentially 'a man of the people,' and was directly taken by God from his secular employment and charged with his sacred mission. He belonged to the Southern Kingdom but when he received the prophetic call it was to Bethel, the royal sanctuary of the North, that he

[15] McFadyen, J.E.- A Cry for Justice, P.188

bent his steps. On a high feast-day he opened his Commission. Making his way through the throng of careless merry-making worshippers, he began to cry his message in the haunting measure employed in the lamentations of professional mourners:

"She is fallen, to rise no more
The Virgin of Israel!
Cast down upon her land
None to upraise her!"[16]

Appeal to Surrounding Nations

Amos looks about him with his keen prophetic eye and sees with sorrow and indignation the same fundamental pieties violated and the same cruel atrocities perpetrated. Amos is stirred and with no sympathy for his neighbors appeals to fear with his strong message of doom.

"Jehovah will roar from Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem; and the pastures of the shepherds shall mourn and the top of Carmel shall wither."[17]

These countries must have forgotten the power of Jehovah. From early times Israel's God was pictured as being attended by earthquake (Judg.V.[5].). On one occasion he 'rained fire' (Gen.14:24); caused pestilence (Exod.12:29); or sent drought (Gen.41:27-28). To Amos God had all the forces of nature, and every natural plague in His control. He can cause an eclipse of the sun.[18] He has power in heaven and in the underworld, as well as in the bottom of the sea.[19] Hence a God with that power is the God in whose name Amos speaks.

[16]Amos 5:2
[17] " 1:2
[18]Amos 8:9
[19] " 9:2-3

"For three transgressions, yea, for four, I will not turn away the punishment thereof." This has been interpreted as meaning countless transgressions. Here Amos expresses the certainty of the doom that is soon to come accompanied by both storm and thunder; a destruction that will make the 'pastures' mourn with consternation and grief. With this strong instrument of the destructive power of God in his hand Amos preaches to these surrounding nations with a conscientious attempt to frighten them to righteousness. Prior to the coming of the scientific age in this country, this has been one of the most effective evangelistic instruments used in America.

As Amos pleads to the nations, his utterance is a continuous deadly monotone of ruin and destruction. Doom is coming! Why? In the Philistines and Phoenicians, it is the heartless slave-trade that stirs the prophet to indignation; in the Edomites,it is the pitiless and relentless hatred with which they had harassed brother Israel, and pursued him with the sword"; in the Ammonites, it is their unspeakable barbarity to women in a war whose only justification was the extension of territory; in the Moabites, it is the insolence with which they had defied and insulted the pieties universally cherished towards the dead by burning to ashes the body of their fallen foe.

One outstanding thing to notice in the prophetic appeal of Amos is the constant play upon the words: "I will not turn

away the punishment thereof," meaning as Cripps says, "I will require (it) of him."[20]

Amos appealed with his message of Doom to these nations because their sins were so flagrant. To him it mattered not who were the victims of these crimes. Humanity was one and undivided; and the laws of morality prevailed throughout the world. The burning of the King of Edom's bones was as heinous an offence in Yahweh's sight as the grossest indignities perpetrated on Israel, and the nations that sinned must die. For their repeated transgressions - unable any longer to hold it back - Yahweh would send a fire into their midst to devour their walls and palaces; and the peoples should perish in tumult and tempest, the hurrahs and the noise of the trumpet in battle, while the Kings and their princes passed into captivity together, saith Jehovah.[21] As Amos appeals he attempts to shame them with the knowledge of their national sins. He tells them that Jehovah is Justice and those who have failed to live in his way must die.

Appeal to Israel for Social Justice

The simple explanation of all this social injustice, which was to cost the people of Israel is, as Amos says, that they did not know how to do the straight forward thing. They had lost all ideas of right and wrong, but this did not excuse them. They did not know, but they should have known; the very

[20] Cripps, R.S-Amos, P.119 [21] Amos 1:3; 2:3

heathen knew,- the Assyrians and the Egyptians to whom Amos appealed - and even they would have been shocked at the confusion and oppression which reigned in Hebrew society. In the mad haste after riches, in the dissolute luxury of city life, they had lost touch with the eternal facts, they had forgotten God's everlasting laws; they had no time for reflection, no interest in it; no eyes for facts that would have been plain and probable enough to thinking men; no ears for the rumbling thunder that foretold the storm.

To such a civilization, with no heart for the needless sorrows of the poor and no mind for anything but the exploitation of the weaker members of society, there can be but one end. The God whom it has insulted, will smite it, the whole of it. Thus the Appeal of Doom is given to Israel as well as the other nations. Yes, said Amos in his grim and terrible way, some of you will be saved. But this will be the manner of your salvation: "As a shepherd saves a pair of legs or a piece of an ear from the mouth of a lion, so shall the children of Israel be saved."

. There is something daring with which Amos faces the happy crowd of worshippers and declares that, because their social life is cruel and rotten and their religion nothing but a gorgeous sham, the day is speedily coming when God will sweep it all away, levelling their ancient places of worship and their palatial mansions with the ground.

Israel, doom is coming to you because if any nation in the earth should have known about me, it is you. Look what I have done for you! More than I have for any other nation, yet you wandered away! "You, only have I known of all the families of the earth; for I brought you up out of the land og Egypt."[22]

When Jehovah comes he will visit the altars of Bethel and not only the people and their houses. Think of it - the very altars that are dedicated to himself, in which they trust.

Now he turns to the women - the wives of the aristocracy and the well-to-do and hurls at them the following speech:

> "Hear this word, O cows of Bashan, who are in
> the hills of Samaria,
> Who oppress the weak, who crush the needy,
> Who say to their lords, 'Bring, that we may drink':
> Yahweh has sworn by his holiness
> Behold days are coming upon you
> When they will lift you by the nose with hooks,
> And by your hind quarters with fish hooks,
> And you will be dragged forth through the
> breaches, each one straight ahead,
> And you will be thrown upon the dung-heaps.
> It is the oracle of Yahweh.[23]

These women did what no animal can do. They are fit partners for the lords who 'store up violence and robbery in their palaces.' Bring and let us drink. This was one of the national perils of the day. The money that pays for the wine is got by crushing the poor.

Here Amos is attempting to appeal to their religious morals. It is bad enough to indulge in these injustices, but

[22]Amos 3:2 [23]Amos 4:1-3

you ought to be ashamed to go straightway to the temple of worship and offer up sacrifices to God. Those things please you but not Jehovah. It is not sacrifice and worship alone but social justice as well.

Justification of Doom

As Amos proclaims his message of destruction and judgment, he does not hesitate to tell Israel that God is justified in sending it. He gave you cleanness of teeth, which means famine; he sent you drought; he sent you pestilence; he has slain your young men with the sword; he has overthrown cities; in spite of all these warnings you continued to be an alien to my ways, consequently prepare to meet thy God." You are not worthy of salvation. You must die! Probably you are not acquainted with the God that I have reference to:

> "For, lo, he that formeth the mountains, and created the wind, and declareth unto man what is his thought; that maketh the morning darkness, and treadeth upon the high places of the earth - Jehovah, the God of hosts, is his name."[24]

Appeal to Seek Jehovah

In spite of the stern spirit of discipline found in Amos, he has a tender and pitiful heart. The thoughts of the inevitable doom upon Israel and surrounding nations must have pained his heart. He thinks that repentance might change the situation. He turns with the appeal: "Seek Me, and ye shall live," saith Jehovah. What is meant by seeking Jehovah becomes clearer as the prophet proceeds. He is certainly not to be

[24] Amos 4:12

sought at Bethel or any of the other shrines to which Israel was devoted, but in righteous conduct,especially to the lowly and unfortunate. Seek not with the hope of saving yourselves by even the most zealous observance of rites and ceremonies.

> "Seek not Bethel, nor enter into Gilgal, and pass not to Beersheba; for Gilgal shall surely go into captivity, and Bethel shall come to nought. Seek Jehovah, and ye shall live."[25]

The passion of Amos's soul is for the establishment of social justice and moral righteousness. The plea of Amos here brought a new idea in Hebrew thought. The requirements of Jehovah were not ceremonial but moral.

Amos cannot refrain from his appeal of doom. He describes the terrors of the day of Jehovah. "It is a day of darkness and gloom, a day of cloud and shadow, the sun shall be turned into darkness and the moon into blood, and the stars shall withdraw their brightness." It will be a day of lions and bears and serpents.

The people must have been stung into indignation as they listened to this appeal. I imagine Amos was interrupted at this point in his speech by the angry crowd who cried out, "How can these things be? Look at the sacrifices made at the sanctuaries! Look at our worship! Notice the huge crowds attending them! Listen to the sweet music!" Then Amos, stronger than ever, replies:

25 Amos 5:6

> "I hate, I despise your feasts, and I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Yea, though ye, offer me your burnt-offerings and meal offerings, I will not accept them. Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. But let justice roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream."[26]

Appeal to Israel's National Pride

Now Amos appeals to those that are at ease - those whose luxury had glutted them into the feeling of false security. This sense of security was not unnatural. The nation was at peace; their own resources were abundant, their God was manifestly favorable, and they were resolved to retain that favor by their elaborate and costly worship and by their enthusiasm for religion as they understood it. As the mountains were round about Samaria and Jerusalem, so, they believed, would Jehovah be round about His people. Let the worst come to the worst, they had God and the mountains and that was surely enough.

With this confidence went conceit. The people styled themselves the foremost nation. But Amos punctures their pride by a few historical illustrations. (Ch.6:2) The leaders of the national life were men whose heads were swollen with a ridiculous sense of their nation's place in the world, men unable to measure the political forces or estimate the political probabilities of the day and foolishly confident of their own impregnability.

[26]Amos 5:21-24

> "I hate your palaces," saith Jehovah. It has cost the happiness of the poor and the character of the rich. They have been built upon cruelty, extortions, injustice."

As Amos makes his appeal he cannot find words to express his amazement. "Shall horses run upon the rock," he asks, "or will one plough the sea with oxen, that ye have turned justice into poison,and the fruit of righteousness into wormwood."[27] Who but a madman would think of driving horses over a cliff? Who but a fool would dream of ploughing the sea with oxen? The oxen and the fool who drove them would be drowned. The end of all such attempts would be futility, ruin and death. Such is the case of the fools and madmen of Israel. There are natural laws in the universe that no man can violate; there are spiritual laws no man can violate. Jehovah hast measured Israel with his moral plumb-line and her walls are not straight. Just as the architect orders the destruction of a wall that cannot stand the test when applied, so will I command that my people be destroyed, because they are incurably wicked.

Final Appeal of Doom

In the clash with Amaziah, priest of Bethel, Amos again returns to his message of doom. He tells of the wrath of Jehovah - "Thy wife shall be a harlot in the city, and thy sons and thy daughters shall fall by the sword, and thou thyself shall die in a land that is unclean."

Amos is not speaking from his own knowledge. Jehovah has shown him a vision of a basket of summer fruit ready for

27 Amos 6:12-14

eating. Israel is ripe and ready for destruction:

> "And the songs of the temple shall be wailings in that day," saith the Lord Jehovah: "the dead bodies shall be many; in every place shall they cast them forth with silence."[28]

This appeal expresses a coming judgment from which there is no escape:

> "Though they dig into sheol, thence shall my hand take them out thence; though they be hid in the bottom of the sea, thence will I command the serpent and it shall bite them. And though they go into captivity, thence will I command the sword, and it shall slay them."[29]

Those who think it is possible to escape are mistaken. This idea is expressed by the psalmist. "How shall we escape destruction, if we dash ourselves against the solid walls of the city of God?"

SUMMARY

The God of Amos was a rigid judge who sat on the throne of justice and ruled with stern discipline. To those who would not obey his laws, He punished. The message of Amos was an expression of the certainty of Doom that was coming to Israel and the surrounding nations. This doom will be accompanied by both storm and thunder; a destruction that will make the pastures mourn with consternation and grief. Israel and the surrounding nations had violated the moral and religious laws of God. There was heartless slavetrade, international strife, exploitation of the weaker members of society, and the feeling of false security. These sins are incurable and doom is

[28] Amos 8:3; [29] Amos 9:4

inevitable. There is coming a day of darkness and gloom, a day of cloud and shadow. It will be a day of lions and bears and serpents. Amos appeals through fear. The appeal of fear has been one of the most effective evangelistic instruments used by preachers. The passion of Amos's soul is for the establishment of social justice and moral righteousness, but the outstanding sins of the nations are incurable. The nations had not met God's requirements; for the requirements of Jehovah are not ceremonial but moral.

Amos appeals to no dogma nor form of law, nor to any religious or national institution. To a group of people buried in every kind of conceivable sin in the sight of God, and yet which had the self-conceit to believe that they were saved, there was nothing but doom. Nature will respond with echoes when God shall make manifest His presence in that great judgment day, and no one will escape. The message of Amos is an appeal of Fear.

CHAPTER IV

HOSEA

As Amos expressed religion as meaning Divine Righteousness, Hosea expressed it absolutely in terms of Divine Love. Amos appealed for eternal righteousness, thundering against the many sins of the people, terrifying and frightening them with the threat of doom. Hosea is a preacher of a different type. His gospel is one of infinite love, pleading with men to repent, telling them with tenderest sympathy that their sins are felt by the heart of Jehovah, and pay-day is coming if they continue to persist in them.

The influence of the home life of Amos had made him stern and rugged. He had lived in the wilderness and he had been impressed by nature in its severer moods. He knew about the grandeur of the storm and the awe of the great open spaces. Everything in his appeal was rigid discipline; he was somewhat lacking in sympathy. Hosea was altogether different in his approach. He was gentle, affectionate, full of poetic illustrations, and yet sincere and forceful.

Without a doubt Hosea must have lived most of his life in the city; for many of his figures and analogies are drawn from city life.

Speaking of his prominence among the prophets, Knudson says, "Along with Amos and Isaiah he laid the foundations of

literary prophecy, and so must be regarded as one of the most important agents through whom God made special revelation of himself to Israel."[1] Cornill says[2] that Amos's God is essentially a criminal judge, inspiring fear but not love; and on fear alone neither the heart of man nor religion can exist. But to Hosea God is not a man, whose last word is anger and passion. He is the Holy One, the Merciful One, whose pity overcomes. He cannot cast aside a people whom He once loved. He will draw them to Himself, improve them, educate them - God is a Kind Father who punishes his child with a bleeding heart, for its own good so that afterwards he might enfold it all the more warmly in His arms. "He and his intellectual and spiritual compeer, Jeremiah, were men of emotion, the most intense and most deeply religious of all the prophets of Israel." Geo. A. Smith speaking of him says,[3] "We shall not exaggerate if we say that there is no truth uttered by later prophets about Divine Grace, which we do not find in germ in him. Isaiah of Jerusalem was a greater statesman and a more powerful writer, but he had not Hosea's tenderness and insight into motive and character. Hosea's marvelous sympathy both with the people and with God is sufficient to foreshadow every grief, every hope, every gospel, which makes the Book of Jeremiah and the great prophet of the Exile exhaustless in their spiritual value to mankind. These others explored the Kingdom of God:

[1]Beacon Lights of Prophecy, P.91 [3]Twelve Prophets, P.230
[2]Prophets of Israel, P.47

it was Hosea who took it by storm. He is the first prophet of Grace, Israel's first Evangelist, yet with a keen sense of law, and of the inevitableness of ethical discipline, as Amos himself."

The prophet always had in mind the hopeless condition of his people. It must have pained his heart to know that Jehovah would ultimately destroy those whom he had loved so dearly. So he appeals to them with exhortations, lamentations, warnings, pleadings, denouncements, promises - in fact, with every possible method of persuasion - in order that he may win the people back to a purer and more acceptable service of their God.

The Times of Hosea

The death of Jeroboam had been succeeded by a period of the most frightful anarchy. Public life had become hopelessly degraded. The death of Jeroboam marked the beginning of radical changes in the political situation. The luxury, selfishness, oppression of the poor, the kindred vices growing out of the prosperity of Jeroboam's reign were denounced in stern tone by Amos. Almost the first words in the book of Hosea announce judgment upon the hated dynasty.[4] When the dynasty of Jehu came to an end, a period of anarchy followed.[5] Kings came forward in rapid succession; Shallum, the murderer of Zechariah, was overthrown after one month, by Menahem.[6] He, to strengthen his position, bought the support of Tiglathpileser III[7]

[4]Hosea 1:4-5
[5] " 7:3-7; 8:4
[6]2Kings 15:14
[7] " 15:25

Menahem, the only ruler of this period to die a natural death, was succeeded by his son Pekahiah, who after two years was assassinated by Pekah. Pekah was deposed and murdered by Hosea, and in 734 B.C. Hosea became the last King of the northern Kingdom.

Little needs to be said concerning the moral situation. Hosea sums up his indictment in one word - whoredom. Israel, the spouse of Yahweh, had proved faithless to her husband in the spheres of religion, morals, and politics. The people were without a knowledge of Yahweh, consequently they were in ignorance concerning his real requirements. Their worship was not acceptable. Nominally they paid homage to Yahweh,[8] in reality they honored the Baals.[9] In the sphere of morals their lack of knowledge of Yahweh has resulted in conduct that is absolutely contrary to the demands of Yahweh; immoralities, crime, and vices of every description are practiced openly in defiance of all prophetic exhortations.[10] In the sphere of politics the faithlessness manifests itself in a twofold manner: in rebellion against legitimate authority and assignations of successive kings and princes, in dependence upon human defense, and foreign alliance, rather than upon the power of Yahweh.

From the expression "Our King" in Chapter 7, we may conclude that Hosea's home was in the northern Kingdom. He also uses the names of Gilead, Gibeah, Gilgal, Jezreel, Ramah,

[8] 5:6; 6:6ff [10] 2:2ff; 4:11ff; 8:4ff; 9:10;14:1-3
[9] 2:5,8,13

Shechem, Bethel, and Samaria, all found in the northern realm. Another argument is his sympathetic attitude toward Israel. "In every sentence," says Ewald, "it appears that Hosea had not only visited the Kingdom of Ephraim, as Amos had done, but that he is acquainted with it from the depths of his heart, and follows all its doings, aims, and fortunes with the profound feelings gendered of such sympathy as is conceivable in the case of a native prophet only." And says Elmslie "the words of Amos sound like a voice from outside, pealing with the thunder of God's anger and righteous indignation against wrongs and injuries that Amos does not feel himself bound up with." The characteristic of Hosea's book is that the burden of Israel's guilt lies weighty on his soul; he wails, and mourns, and laments, and repents with that sinful people.

Influence of His Marriage on His Prophetic Appeal

The marriage of Hosea to a woman whom he greatly loved and the breaking up of his home through his wife's unfaithfulness certainly influenced the appeal of his message. It led him to understand more fully than ever before the heinousness of Israel's shortcomings and the depth of Yahweh's love for His people in spite of their disregard. It is highly significant and interesting to note the manner in which Hosea was made aware of his prophetic calling. It is a living example to show how genuine human sentiment always leads to God. It was out of this family trouble that he was brought to a closer meaning of

the tender mercies of God. Chapters 1-3 give the account of this experience.

> "Jehovah said unto Hosea, Go take unto thee a wife of whoredom and children of whoredom; for the land doth commit great whoredom, departing from Jehovah. So he went and took Gomer the daughter of Diblaim; and she conceived, and bare him a son. And Jehovah said unto him, call his name Jezreel for yet a little while and I will avenge the blood of Jesu upon the house of Jehu, and will cause the Kingdom of the house of Israel to cease. And it shall come to pass at that day, that I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel. And she conceived again and bare a daughter, and Jehovah said unto him, Call her name Lo-ruhahmah; for I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel, that I should in any wise pardon them. But I will have mercy upon the house of Judah, and will save them by Jehovah their God, and will not by horsemen. Now when she had weaned Lo-ruhahmah, she conceived, and bare a son. And Jehovah said, Call his name Lo-Ammi; for ye are not my people and I will not be your God."

Harper summarizes the experience as follows:[1] In obedience to the command of God, Hosea married a woman called Gomer-bath-Diblaim, who afterward proves unfaithful to him. At the birth of the first son, whose father is another than Hosea, although the latter is yet ignorant of his wife's infidelity, Hosea calls him Jezreel, a name of symbolical character. When the next child, a daughter, comes (also in sin), Hosea, now cognizant of his wife's unfaithfulness names the child "No-Love." Still another son is born, who is called by Hosea "Not-any-Kin." The woman, it would seem, now leaves home and falls into the hands of some man whose slave-concubine she becomes. But Hosea, who has loved her from the beginning and in spite of all her shame, purchases her at the price of a slave. The rela-

[1] Amos and Hosea, P.C.XLII

tionship of wife, however, is not reestablished; she is placed where she will, in discipline, be shut off from intercourse with men, even from the legitimate intercourse with her own husband. The conclusion of the story is not given us. We do not know whether in the end she was finally restored to full companionship or not.

Dr. Harper argues that Gomer was brought back for the purpose of being secluded from temptation, and that there was no intention on the part of Hosea to restore her to her position. Dr. Melville Scott says[2] that this seems inadmissible. What was the purpose of this temporary seclusion if it were not to lead to eventual restoration. He further states that if this supposition makes the whole transaction inconceivable, it also robs the application of the history of Israel of all its cogency. What Hosea wanted was Gomer. He wanted her love. He wanted her to be at the end all he had hoped of her at the beginning of their marriage life. The fundamental thing to be noted in this experience is that the principle contribution was not the message concerning the destruction of Israel, but that concerning the great love of Yahweh in spite of faithlessness. The sin of Israel is as the sin of Gomer, an offence against love: it is not merely infraction of law. Hosea's love could not be vanquished by sin. When she fled away to her lovers, even then Hosea's love followed her until he at last found her. As it was between Hosea and Gomer, so it was

[2] The Message of Hosea, P.14

between Yahweh and Israel.

As Dr. Mackintosh says:

> "Perhaps radical criticism is right when it tells us that Amos had no message of mercy. In his book possibly the passages of comfort are indeed later glosses. But such a conclusion is unthinkable in regard to Hosea. His most characteristic expression is, 'How can I give thee up?' Precisely when the horror of sin is seen, pardon and rescue becomes inevitable, and gospel tidings of grace begin to be heard."[3]

Hosea recognizes in this relation to his wife an image of the relation of God to Israel. God had chosen the poor, despised Israelites, the slaves of the Egyptians, to be His people; had allied himself with them in love and faith, showered his blessings upon the nation, miraculously guided it, and finally made it great andmighty. All these great mercies were repaid by Israel with the blackest ingratitude. Its service of God is, in the eyes of the prophet, a worship of Baal, a mockery of the Holy God, whom it knows not, and of whom it does not want to know - therefore nothing remains but inevitable doom and destruction. But God is not responsible for his judgment. He wants to lead them in the right path. When they learn to pray in distress, when they humbly turn to God with open confession of their sins, then will he turn to them again, then will He accept into grace those who have fallen. As Cornill states it:[4] "Right and justice, grace and pity, love and faith, will He bring to them as the blessings and

[3]Christianity and Sin, P.21

[4]Prophets of Israel, P.50

gifts of the new convenant-they will become his willing and obedient children. He will be to Israel as the dew, and Israel shall grow as the lily and blossom out as the olive tree, and stand there in the glory and scent of Lebanon."

To Hosea God was love. The kind of love that Paul expresses in his letter to the Corinthian Church. Love which is long-suffering and kind, which seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, which heareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things, the love which never faileth. "When we consider that this is absolutely new, that those thoughts in which humanity has been educated and which have consoled it for nearly these thousand years, were first spoken by Hosea, we must reckon him among the greatest religious geniuses which the world has ever produced."[5]

While Hosea brooded upon his pain one of the first things he would remember would be the fact that the case of his home was not singular, but common and characteristic of his day. Other homes like his own, no doubt, had seen the same experience. His own sorrow became the key to the sorrow of God. If only a single woman could bring him all the anxiety that he suffered, what about God who was looking at the affairs of the whole nation?

With this experience burning in his heart, Hosea went out to appeal to Israel to return from her sin and meet the warm welcome of a still loving God. Hosea had seen it in his

[5]Prophets of Israel, P.52

own life; he had felt it in his own heart; he knew what it meant. After all, the greatest preaching is that which comes out of the experiences of human life felt by the preacher himself. The Christian religion would never possess its strong appeal to men and women were it not for the fact that its founder suffered the pains of this life himself. The home life of Hosea kindled the spark for his prophetic message and gave it the necessary sympathetic effect that it needed in order to make men feel it.

Hosea's Prophetic Appeal

Appeal for True Knowledge of God

Hosea makes plain the fact that there is a relationship that has always existed between Yahweh and Israel, the terms of which Israel has failed to observe. In spite of the great blessings showered down by Jehovah, the land is still corrupt, hence it is time for Yahweh to speak through the appeal of Hosea.

> "Hear the word of the Lord, ye children of Israel;
> For the Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants
> of the land.
> Because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge
> of God in the land."[6]

When Hosea says there is no truth in the land, he means no fidelity, no honesty, no constancy, no trustworthiness in thought, word, and deed; by the absence of love he means not love of man for God, nor love of God for man; but love for fellow-men. The elements of character and conduct are lacking

[6] 4:1

because men do not know the ways of Jehovah. Swearing, lying, killing, stealing, committing adultery, and bloodshed fill the land. Hosea makes his first appeal with a message of punishment. He first appeals to the priests. It is not you, the laity, bad as you are, who are most to blame. The real fault lies with the priests. For thy penalty, thou shalt suffer one blow after another. Your duty was to teach the life-giving knowledge of God; you have been prepared to that end, yet you have failed, henceforth thou art no priest of mine. The whole stock shall perish. As thou hast rejected knowledge, so will I reject thee; as thou hast forgotten me, so will I forget thee.

The priests have encouraged a false externality of religion in self-interest. "They eat up the sin of my people, and they set their heart on their iniquity." (4:8). That is to say they live on the vices of the people. Their punishment shall come upon them as a reward for their deeds. They shall perish, because they have abandoned Yahweh their God and followed the desires and passions of their own hearts. Because they have a near place to Jehovah he will not save them: "Like people, like priest; and I will punish them for their ways, and reward them for their doings. For they shall eat, and not have enough; they shall commit whoredom, and shall not increase." (4:10).

Hosea then turns to the people with an appeal to them. You who have stupidly resorted to divination, your inner spirit is wrong. Indulgence in wine and harlotry has driven you mad; everywhere is sensuality to be seen. You are devoted to your sanctuaries, where there is idolatrous worship. Your daughters, guilty as they may be, do not deserve punishment. For they go aside with elders and priests; to the leaders belong the blame for the situation. Like a stubborn heifer, Israel acts stubbornly to the will of God. Ephraim is wedded to idols. Doom is coming. A wind will sweep her in its wings. Israel will be carried away with the suddenness and violence of a wind storm. Punishment is certain; it will be twofold, viz., from without, an invading army which will lay waste the land; also from within, corruption and anarchy with civil war; the moth, and the lion.

Hosea's Second Appeal

> "Hear ye this, O Priests;
> And hearken, ye house of Israel;
> And give ye ear, O house of the King;
> For judgment is toward you,
>
> Because ye have been a snare on Mizpah
> And a net spread upon Tabor,
> And the revolters are profound to make slaughter,
> Though I have been a rebuker of them all,
> I know Ephraim, and Israel is not hid from me."[7]

Hosea opens a second appeal to three classes of people: the priests, already rebuked in Ch.4; the people, ensnared by the priests into a sinful worship; the house of the King. Here

[7] 5:1-3

Hosea refreshes his appeal of judgment, pointing out the shortcomings of these to whom he addressed his message:-

"O Ephraim, thou committest whoredom, and Israel is defiled.
They will not frame their doings to turn unto their God;
For the spirit of whoredoms is in the midst of them.
They have dealt treacherously against the Lord;
For they have begotten strange children."[8]

It is too late, says the prophet, to use the ordinary means of appeasing Jehovah's wrath, which has only a value as the outward signs of penitence and faith. The time for punishment has arrived. There is no knowledge of Jehovah in the land. "Blow ye the cornet.....the trumpet," a usual direction on the approach of an invading army. Give the alarm and signal out in the signal towns.

"Therefore I will pour out my wrath upon them like water.
Ephraim is oppressed and broken in judgment,
Because he willingly walked after the commandment.
Therefore will I be unto Ephraim as a moth,
And to the house of Judah as rottenness."[9]

Ephraim saw his sickness, and Israel his sore. The sickness is not only political but also religious and moral as well. Outside assistance will be sought, but the King cannot heal you, nor relieve you. It is useless to seek outside help. "For I, myself, will be like a lion to Ephraim, and like a young lion to the house of Israel."[10] This is the strongest possible metaphor that Hosea could use to explain the wrath and destructive powers of God. The affection of Israel is divinely ordained, hence appeal to human aid is of no avail.

[8] 5:3-4;6-7
[9] 5:10-12
[10] 5:14a

"I will take away, and none shall rescue him."[11] This picture paints the figure of that of a lion dragging away the prey, and none daring to interfere.

Israel's repentance does not at all remove the guilt which is to be made manifest to all. "She sees," says Geo. A. Smith,[12] "that their leaders are so helpless, and feeling their wounds, the people may themselves turn to God for healing, but that will be with a repentance so shallow as also to be futile. They have no conviction of sin, nor appreciation of how deeply their evils have eaten."

"Come and let us return unto Jehovah;
For he hath torn, and he will heal us;
He hath smitten, and he will bind us up.
He will bring us to life in a couple of days;
On the third day He will raise us up again,
That we may live in His presence.
Let us know, let us follow up to know, Jehovah;
And soon as we seek Him, we shall find Him.
And he shall come to us like the winter-rain,
Like the spring-rain, pouring on the land!"

But God receives this prayer with incredulity and impatience. "What can I make of thee, Ephraim? What can I make of thee, Judah? Since your love is like the moring cloud and like the dew so early gone." Hosea appeals again to the wrath of God: "Wherefore I have hewn them by the prophets; I have slain them by the words of my mouth, and my judgment goes forth like the lightning. For real love have I desired, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings." Hosea pleads for an inner loyalty rather than an outer observation.

[11] 5:14c [12] The Twelve Prophets, P.263

Now the political decay is shown by Hosea. "Ephraim is a cake not turned." In other words her political life was like a thin pancake, which, left on the heated stove of the oven, is burnt on one side and unbaked on the other." This image would cover,

(1) the unequal distribution of wealth, the very rich and the poor;
(2) the separation between religious and secular worship on Sunday, godlessness in the week;
(3) the hot and cold of the frantic political relations with Assyria or Egypt;
(4) the half-baked character, made up of extremes, and never harmonized."[13]

Therefore! whenever the prophet uses this word you can expect something powerfully strong to follow. It was characteristic of Amos. After he had so beautifully pictured the evils of Israel and the surrounding nations, he would pause after each indictment and with this word therefore give an idea what was coming. Therefore for these political wrongs, says Hosea, Jehovah appeals with anger and vengeance,-

"I will bring them down as the fowls of the heaven: I will chastise them, as their congregation hath heard. Woe unto them: for they have wandered from me; destruction unto them! for they have trespassed against me: though I would redeem them, yet they have spoken lies against me. And they have not cried unto me with their heart, but they howl upon their beds; they assemble themselves for corn and wine, they rebel against me. Though I have taught and strengthened their arms, yet do they imagine mischief against me. They return, but not to him that is on high; they are like a deceitful bow: their princes shall fall by the sword for the rage of their tongue: this shall be their derision in the land of Egypt."[14]

[13] New Century Bible, P.42

[14] 7:12-16

So incurable is the disease of the people until nothing remains but punishment.

"Set the trumpet to thy mouth."[15]

Appeal to Worshippers

Israel's Kings are not appointed by Yahweh. Israel's zeal in worship is only zeal in sinning, as Geo. A. Smith calls their practices worshipping "artificial kings and artificial Gods." Yahweh instead of accepting their sacrifices will bring a visitation of an exile.

> "He hath cast off thy calf, O Samaria; mine anger is kindled against them.....Israel is swallowed up: now are they among the nations as a vessel wherein is no pleasure..... Ephraim hath multiplied altars to sin, altars have been unto him to sin. Though I write for him my law in ten thousand precepts, they are counted as a strange thing.... Now will I remember their iniquity, and visit their sins; they shall return to Egypt. Israel hath forgotten his maker, and builded palaces; and Judah hath multiplied fenced cities; but I will send a fire upon his cities, and it shall devour the castles thereof."[16]

What an appeal of wrath, indignation, jealousy and destructive powers of Jehovah! It is a puzzle to wonder how individuals and nations remained contented after listening to these fearless words. The idea the prophet stated over and over was - no matter what temples you may build, what sacrifices you may make, if there is no knowledge of God in the land the nation is doomed.

In order to make this destruction a little more emphatic, Hosea tells how Yahweh brought Israel out of the wilder-

[15] 8:1; [16] 8:12-14

ness, yet she committed whoredom in social and religious practices. Hosea appeals to God to give them a miscarrying womb and dry breasts (no more motherhood - no more birth). The exile is close at hand. There will be a breaking up of the social and religious habits. Israel is to be carried into exile to Assyria and Egypt, where it will be impossible to celebrate feasts and festivals; and her land will be one of thorns and thistles.

> "Rejoice not, O Israel, for thou hast played the harlot, departing from thy God. The threshing-floor and the wine-press shall not feed them, and the new wine shall fail her. They shall not dwell in Jehovah's land; but Ephraim shall return to Egypt, and they shall eat unclean food in Assyria..... The days of visitation are come, the days of recompense are come; Israel shall know it."[17]

Hosea reverts to Israel's guilt once more in Chapter 10. Using the figure of a luxuriant vine, he describes Israel's external prosperity, a prosperity that had increased steadily, but the greater the prosperity, the more flagrant the moral and religious corruption. Therefore Israel's altars, idols, and pillars shall be broken down, the calves of Samaria shall be carried to Assyria, priests and people shall be in terror and shall mourn; even the King shall be cut off.

Sympathetic Appeal of Love

Hosea's heart is deeply moved by the thoughts of this impending destruction. His heart is torn with grief, in all its moods and sentiments. He must have suddenly thought how

[17] 9:1-3

he felt when Gomer left him; how his heart was willing to forgive her many sins, if she would only return to him. With this idea of home-life burning in his soul, Hosea thought of the intimacy that existed between father and son. It is out of this idea that Hosea makes his next appeal.

> "When Israel was a child, I loved him and called him as my son out of Egypt. But the more I called the more they went from me; they sacrificed unto Baalim and burned incense to graven images. I taught Ephraim also to walk, taking him in my arms. But they knew not that I meant good with them. I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love; and I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws, and I laid meat unto them. Yet they will not return into the land of Egypt, and Asshur be their King. Of me they will know nothing. So shall the sword abide in their cities, destroy their towers, and devour their strongholds. My people are bent to backsliding from me; when called on from on high, none looketh upwards. How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee, Israel? Shall I make thee as Admah? Shall I set thee as Zeboim? My heart is turned within me, my compassion is cramped together. I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger. I will not return to destroy thee Ephraim, for I am God and not man; the Holy One in the midst of thee. I cannot come to destroy."[18]

There is certainly a sympathetic emotional touch in this appeal of Hosea. He compares Israel to a child who had been guilty of ingratitude and desertion. Yahweh, his father, had brought him out of Egypt, but he wandered away worshipping other gods. Harper explains the situation when he translates,[19] "And yet it was I who brought him up, teaching him to walk, carrying him in my arms, leading him kindly, treating him mercifully, gently feeding him." Geo. A. Smith expressed the idea Hosea has in mind when he says,[20] "A man has a mystic

[19]Amos and Hosea; P.360 [20]Twelve Prophets, P.296

power of a very wonderful kind upon the animals over whom he is placed. On any of these wintry roads of ours we may see it, when a kind carter gets down at a hill, and, throwing the reins on his beast's back, will come to its head and touch it with his bare hands, and speak to it as if it were his fellow; till the deep eyes fill with light, and out of these things, so much weaker than itself, a touch, a glance, a word, there will come to it new strength to pull the stranded wagon onward. The man is as a god to the beast, coming down to help it, and it almost makes the beast human that he does so. Not otherwise does Hosea feel the help which God gives His own on the weary hills of life. We need not discipline, for our work is discipline enough, and the cares we carry of themselves keep us straight and steady. But we need sympathy and gentleness - this humanity which the prophet attributes to our God."

God still loved Israel in spite of all her sins and he would not deal with her according to her shortcomings, for He is God and not man. Though prophecy has failed He will try His love again. Then follows what Geo. A. Smith calls, "the greatest passage in Hosea - deepest if not highest of his book- the breaking forth of that exhaustless mercy of the Most High which no sin of man can bar back nor wear out."[21]

"How shall I give thee up, Ephraim?
How shall I cast thee off, Israel?
How shall I set thee as Zeboiim?
My heart is turned within me,
My compassions are kindled together.

[21]Twelve Prophets, P.297

I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger,
I will not return to destroy Ephraim:
For I am God, and not man; the Holy One in the
midst of thee; and I will not come in wrath."[22]

This great appeal of love has without a doubt been the secret of Hosea's prominence through the years. God is Love - was his message. His love is constant. It is not canceled by human sin. The Psalmist beautifully expresses the idea when he says,-

"He hath not dealt with us according to our sins;
Nor rewarded us according to our iniquities:
As far as the heaven is above the earth,
So great is his mercy toward them that fear Him;
As far as the east is from the west,
So far hath he removed our transgressions from us."
Psa.103:10-12.

Final Appeal to Repentance

After Hosea had proclaimed his prophetic appeal of Doom, he turns with the same intensity appealing to them to repent from their sins and return to a still loving Father. In this last appeal there is no feature, physical or moral, which has not been used previously in the book. Israel must do away with senseless sacrifice and come to Jenovah with rational and contrite confession. Hosea pleads to Israel not to put her trust in foreign alliances, but to trust in the fatherly love of her God. He will forget his anger and heal her.

Hosea was sick of artificiality in worship. He wanted to see the truth expressed. He turned to the glory of Lebanon, sees how it retains its beauty untouched by human tool or art, and concludes that such wonder comes only from God.

[22] 11:8-9

Israel, as Hosea appeals, God's sacraments are the open air, the mountain breeze, the dew, the vine, the lilies, the pines; and what God asks of men are not rites nor sacrifices but life, health, fragrance, and fruitfulness, beneath the shadow and dew of His presence.

> "I will be as the dew unto Israel; he shall blossom as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon."[23]

Amos had appealed to Israel to return to God, but for Amos it went forth only as a voice crying in the wilderness. Hosea appealed, but he had behind his message a heart of love. His appeal is "drenched with the dew of God's mercy," of which no drop falls on that of Amos, but whose God is a God of wrath, roaring as a lion; or making his presence known by the flash of lightning. Amos appealed to return to justice, truth and purity, while Hosea appeals with the description of a husband, a father, long-suffering and full of mercy. "I bid you come back," cries Amos. But Hosea pleads, "If only you were aware of what God is, you would come back." "Come back to God and live," cries Amos; but Hosea, "Come back to God, for He is Love." Amos calls, "Come back at once, for there is but little time till God must visit you in judgment;" but Hosea, "Come back at once, for God has loved you so long and kindly." Amos cries, "Turn, for in front of you is destruction;" but Hosea, "Turn, for behind you is God." Geo. A. Smith hasgiven us these wonderful phrases to explain how Hosea was such a master in his evangelistic appeal.

[23]Hosea 14:5

SUMMARY

Hosea too saw the flagrant sins of his day and made many appeals to the wrath, indignation, jealousy and destructive powers of Jehovah. But Hosea did not possess the rugged spirit of Amos. His heart was deeply moved by the thought of this impending doom. As he sees the sins around him his heart is torn with grief, in all its moods and sentiments. God must have felt toward Israel like he felt toward Gomer when she left him, was his strong belief. He loved Gomer even though she had violated the laws of matrimony, and he would forgive her if she returned to him. God loved Israel and would restore her even though she violated his holy laws. God is love. It is not cancelled by human sin.

Behind the appeal of Hosea was a heart of love. His message is "drenched with the dew of God's mercy," of which no drop falls on that of Amos, but whose God is a God of wrath, roaring as a lion; or making his presence by the flash of lightning. The great appeal of love has without a doubt been the secret of Hosea's prominence through the years. It might have taken a message of doom to arouse them but down in the heart of Hosea was a stream of rich love which found expression in his appeal to Israel, "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely." (14:4) The appeal of Hosea was an appeal of Love.

CHAPTER V

ISAIAH

Isaiah is the most distinguished of the remarkable group of Eighth Century Prophets. His public career covers the last forty years of the century, during which time he exercised a commanding political influence in Jerusalem. He began his prophetic career in the death year of Uzziah. (Isa.6:1). Thorn, speaking of him, says,- "He is the prince of the prophets. Others may surpass him in some particular detail of the prophetic character, but in no one else do we see all its elements combined in such just proportion and perfect symmetry- Jeremiah possessed a profounder spiritual experience; Amos and Hosea were more original in their teachings; the great unnamed prophet whose words have come down to us bound up with Isaiah's had a still wider outlook on the world with a clearer vision of the divine purpose. Nevertheless, the figure of Isaiah towers above them all. By the force of his personality, the wisdom of his statesmanship, the power of his sublime oratory, and the far-reaching results of his ministry, he holds a position of indisputable preeminence."

"Never," says Cornill, "did the speech of Canaan pour forth with more brilliant splendor and triumphant beauty than from his lips. He has the strength and power of language, a majesty and sublimity of expression, and an inexhaustible

richness of fitting and stirring imagery, that overwhelms the reader, nay, bewilders him." Isaiah had a strong and commanding personality, which by virtue of his high social station and long public ministry, he was able to bring to bear with tremendous power upon the political and religious issues of his day. He mingled freely with outstanding leaders; he watched their intrigues; he sought to circumvent their secret plans, he denounced their godless policies. "It is this fact," says Knudson, "coupled with the originality of his thought and his unique power of expression, that has given to him his pre-eminence among the prophets."

Like Amos, he was a native of Judah, but, unlike him, he lived in the capitol city and was probably of noble birth. This we infer from the fact that he seems to have had access to the King and court (7:3ff; 8:2; 22:15ff.). He was married and had two sons. To them he gave symbolic names. One was called Shear-Yashub - "A-remnant-shall-return." (7:3); and the other was named Maher-shalal-hash-baz - "Swift-booty-speedy-prey" (8:3). These names expressed two important appeals of the prophet. So wherever the lads went, they were "for sign and for wonder in Israel" (8:18).

The Times of Isaiah

Isaiah's ministry began at the close of the reign of Uzziah of Judah, whose rule roughly synchronized with that of Jeroboam II of Israel. The reign of both kings were times of

great prosperity for their respective countries. In Israel there prevailed a tone of national pride and arrogance which took no account of the judgments with which the Lord has previously humbled the nation (Isa.9:9-10); and their irreligious self-confidence was accompanied by idolatry, luxury, and sensuality (23:1-4). Judah had also attained a degree of wealth, power and civilization which must have placed it, along with Israel, in the front rank of the petty principalities that now separated Egypt from Assyria. "The land was full of silver and gold and was no end of its treasures; the land was full of horses and there was no end of their chariots" (Isa.2:7). Naturally the conditions were similar in Judah. Drunkenness was common (5:11,22). A spirit of scepticism and a confusion of moral distinctions penetrated society (5:19-20). The accumulation of riches enabled the wealthier classes to acquire most of the land of the country (5:8). Justice was corrupt (1:35: 5:23); and the expropriation of the peasant proprietors was accomplished by dishonest means (3:14-15).

This remarkable outburst of material prosperity was attended in both Kingdoms by an aggravation of the social evils which seem inseparable from every oriental system of government. The influx of wealth appears to have accelerated certain economic changes, affecting large masses of the population, against which the prophets at all times loudly protested. The spread of debauchery and luxury amongst the upper classes/ advanced apace.

(Isa.3:16-23;28: 1-8; 32:9ff). But still greater evils followed from the accumulation of capital in the hands of the few. If anything was wanting to enhance the indignation of the prophets at this glaring contrast between the extremes of poverty and luxury, it was found in the methods by which it was brought about. The eviction of the smaller land owners was largely affected by a systematic abuse of the form of justice, corrupt judges favoring the suit of the rich man against the poor, in return for a share of the spoils. (1:23; 3:14; 10:1-2; 29:21). Hence the appeal of the prophet was abounded in denunciation of the injustice and oppression, the avarice and licentiousness which prevailed in the higher ranks of society.

The Syro-Ephraimitic War (B.C.735)

Perhaps the event which first roused the politicians of Jerusalem from their dream of security was an indirect consequence of the forward movement of Assyria. In 735, shortly after Ahaz ascended the throne, a combined attack on Judah was planned by Rezin and Pekah, the Kings of Syria and Ephraim. Ahaz was a man little fitted to cope with a crisis of this magnitude. In his panic-stricken imagination, the immediate peril overrode all considerations of national honor and political prudence, and he resolved to throw himself on the protection of the King of Assyria.[1] He accordingly became tributary to Tiglath-pileser, thereby placing a foreign yoke upon his country and exposing it to the certainty of invasion in the

[1] See Skinner, Isaiah, P.XIII

event of the tribute being refused (2Kgs.16:7-8). In 732 the Assyrian King turned his attention to Syria, took Damascus, and killed Rezin (2Kgs.16:a). Shortly after this Pekah was murdered by Hoshea, whom Tiglath-pileser appointed to succeed him as an Assyrian vassal. Tiglath-pileser died in 727; and against his successor Shalmaneser IV (727-722) Hoshea revolted. In consequence Samaria was besieged in 724, and endured a blockade of more than two years. In the course of the siege Shalmaneser died and was succeeded by Sargon II (722-705), who in 722 took the city, deporting its inhabitants to different parts of the empire. (2 Kgs.17-5-6).

Moral, Social, and Religious Conditions

Socially and morally Judah presented a dark picture during the latter part of the eighth century. Isaiah viewed the situation from the standpoint of the patrician; Micah from that of the humble peasant of the country. The nobles were chiefly responsible for the awful social and moral corruption. Micah describes them as cannibals "who tear the flesh of the people from their bones and devour it" (3:2-3). Isaiah does not spare them: "They that lead Judah cause them to err, the spoil of the poor is in their houses; they crush my people..... The princes are companions of thieves, every one loveth bribes and chaseth after fees, but hath no regard for the cause of the widow and of the fatherless." (3:12-13; 1:23). The greed and rapacity of the nobles knew no limits; like highway robbers they pounced

upon passers-by and stripped off their garments (Mic.2:8); helpless women and children were their special prey;under the guise of the law decisions were given in favor of the one offering the largest bribe. The moral and social conditions in Judah at this time could hardly have been worse.

The picture of the religious life drawn by Isaiah and Micah are equally dark. Religion had become a matter of form. Ceremonial observances were thought to meet all religious requirements, and, as in Israel, the misapprehension was widespread that, as long as the external acts of worship were scrupulously performed the people were entitled to the divine favor and protection. "Jehovah, the God of hosts is with us" was the favorite watchword. In addition to this perverted Jehovah worship, idolatry was quite common. (Isa.2:8).

Significance of Isaiah's Call

According to Chapter 6, verse 1, Isaiah received his prophetic call "in the year that King Uzziah died." This date is given by scholars as being about 740 B.C. Speaking of this call and vision Dr. Knudson says, "it is one of the most impressive passages in the Old Testament."[2] The vision is undoubtedly an actual experience. "Isaiah saw God, not indeed with his bodily eyes, but in a prophetic trance, in which the ordinary operations of the mind were suspended and spiritual realities assumed concrete and visible forms."[3] The prophet was probably worshipping in the temple. As he sits or stands

[2]Beacon Lights of Prophecy, P.128;[3]Skinner, Cambridge Bible,P.42

there he sees the Lord in his heavenly temple "sitting on a throne, high and lifted up." The Lord is King, Jehovah of Hosts." Around him is an angelic gathering crying out, "Holy, holy, holy is Jehovah of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory" (6:3). Here Isaiah got a conception of the majesty and holiness of Jehovah that went with him throughout his whole ministry. Isaiah found out that day that the only exalted thing in the universe was the sovereignty of God. "The lofty looks of men shall be brought low, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and Jehovah alone shall be exalted." (2:11).

"What Isaiah actually felt was the dim-eyed shame, the distraction, the embarrassment, the blinded shock of a personal encounter with one whom he was utterly unfit to meet..... Isaiah did not reach it through argument or brooding. It was not to the prophet what it is to his expositors, a pregnant thought, which his intelligence might gradually unfold, but a Personal Presence, which apprehended and overwhelmed him. God and he were there face to face. 'Then said I, woe is me! for I am undone; because a man unclean of lips am I, and in the midst of a people unclean of lips do I dwell; for the King, Yahweh of Hosts, mine eyes have beheld."[4]

As Isaiah saw this revelation he readily recognized his guilt and sinfulness. He confessed having unclean lips. These unclean lips were a sign of the impurity of his whole nature.

[4]G.A.Smith, The Book of Isaiah, P.68

"Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: and he laid it upon my mouth and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged."[5] "As earthly fire burns away external impurity, so the heavenly fire burns away the defilement of sin, first from the lips, but through them from the whole man." (Dillman). Isaiah's guilt passes away and his sins are atoned for: and as Skinner says, "For the first time Isaiah hears the voice of God, the purification of his lips having fitted him for personal converse with Jehovah and spiritual sympathy with His purposes. The voice speaks: "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, here am I; send me. And he said, Go, and tell this people,-

> Hear ye indeed, but understand not;
> And see ye indeed, but perceive not.
> Make the heart of this people fat,
> And make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes;
> Lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears,
> And understand with their heart, and converse,
> and be healed."[6]

Isaiah realized his responsibility, realized his capability, realized that over him there was one who would guide him, and he surrenders himself to the task. He ventured out on faith in his call. "In these days of dust and distraction, full of party cries, with so many issues of doctrine and duty presenting themselves, and the solid attractions of so many other services insensibly leading men to look for the same sort

[5] 4:6-7 [6] Cambridge Bible, P.46

of attractiveness in the ministry, it may prove a relief to some to ponder on the simple elements of Isaiah's call to be a professional and life-long prophet."[8]

Without a doubt this vivid conception of God and of his task in the world on the heart of Isaiah, he must have presented burning appeals to the people of his day. All of the prophets stood for the establishment of moral standards and spiritual ideals, "but Isaiah upheld the prophetic principles with an uncompromising earnestness and an unflinching courage that revealed unusual depth and power of conviction. This was the direct outcome of the revelation given to him at the commencement of his career. Others had perceived thoughts of the divine truth. Hosea had been dominated by the revelation of Infinite Love. Amos had been inspired by divine righteousness. But when Isaiah was awed and thrilled by the vision of Supreme Holiness, he gained a profounder and more adequate knowledge of God even than his predecessors."[9]

Isaiah's Prophetic Appeal

Appeal for an Awakened Conscience

The first appeal of Isaiah is in the form of a court trial. Ewald calls it 'The Great Arraignment.' The case is carried on in a judicial process. God is Plaintiff and Judge. He delivers both the Complaint in the beginning: "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for Jehovah hath spoken: I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled

[8]G.A.Smith, Isaiah, P.75; [9]Thorn, Prophets of Israel, P.69f

against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not consider.' And the sentence is given at the end. The Assessors are Heaven and Earth, whom the Lord's herald invokes to hear the Lord's plea. The people of Judah are the defendants. The charge against them is one of brutish, ingrate stupidity, breaking out into rebellion. The witness is the prophet himself, whose evidence on the guilt of his people consists in recounting the misery in the land, along with their civic injustice and social cruelty--sins of the upper and ruling classes. The people, of course, plead in self-defense; laborious worship and multiplied sacrifice, is exposed. But this is not sufficient. "What unto me is the multitude of your sacrifice? saith Jehovah: I have had enough of burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fed-beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of hegoats."[10] The trial is concluded - "Come now, let us reason together, saith Jehovah," - by God's offer of pardon to a people thoroughly convicted.

As Isaiah appeals, he says that God reaons with man. He does not make his presence through magic but through rational and moral methods. God first appeals to the conscience of men, so Isaiah endeavors to awaken this conscience first. Even the animals possess more intellect in this regard, "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider."[11] They pray,

[10] Isa: 1:10; [11] Isa.1:3

they sacrifice, but they ignore the requirements of Jehovah.

Isaiah's cry to Israel is "Come and let us reason together," and G. A. Smith says,[12] "to hear it is to have a conscience." Indeed, Isaiah lays more stress on this intellectual side of the moral sense than on the other, and the frequency with which in this chapter he employs the expressions 'know', and 'consider', and 'reason', is characteristic of all his prophesying.

"But the prophet does not leave conscience alone with its personal and inward results. He rouses it to its social application. The sins with which the Jews are charged in this charge of the Lord are public sins..... Judah's disasters, which she seeks to meet by worship, are due to civic faults: bribery, corruption of justice, indifference to the rights of the poor and the friendless..... Conscience with Isaiah is a thoroughfare by which the Lord drives the man out upon the world and the world's manifoldneed of him..... Forgiveness is no end in itself, but the opportunity of social service; not a sanctuary in which Isaiah leaves men to sing its praises or form doctrines of it, but a gateway through which he leads God's people upon the world with the cry that rises from him here: 'Seek justice, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.'"[13] When the conscience shall have been awakened to the knowledge of God, these things will follow.

[12]The Book of Isaiah, P.10; [13]G.A.Smith, The Book of Isaiah,P.14

Appeal to the Proud and Lofty

Here the prophet proceeds, in an impassionate appeal to Jehovah, to contrast the actual condition of His people with his ideal. The city that was destined to be the source of light and truth to all the nations is nothing but a receptacle for the darkest and most degrading errors of heathenism. There was present all the symptoms of apostasy and ungodly pride. Wealth was thought to have been a security; confidence was placed in military resources; idolatry filled the land; the nation had put its confidence in things and men, rather than in God. To Isaiah this was a dark picture. He could see nothing ahead but the "Day of Jehovah." This day would feature an earthquake accompanied by a thunderstorm, directed against all that is "high and lofty," that is, everything which seems to lift its head against the majesty of Jehovah. There was nothing present in the great civilization that was worth saving. The high towers, fenced walls, ships of Tarshish, treasures and armour must perish, even the hills lifted by man's imagination shall be bowed down, "and Jehovah alone shall be exalted in that day." Isaiah appeals with the wrath of God in destroying that which is not pleasing in his sight. This appeal seems to be common to all the prophets.

> "For there shall be a day of Jehovah of hosts upon all that is proud and haughty, and upon all that is lifted up; and it shall be brought low.... And the loftiness of man shall be bowed low, and the haughtiness of men shall be brought low; and Jehovah alone shall be exalted in

> that day... In that day men shall cast away their idols of silver, and their idols of gold.... Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted for?"[14]

Isaiah's appeal here is simply for the nation to turn from these man-made things which create a feeling of self-content, and humble themselves to Him who is majestic and holy.

Appeal of Doom for Jerusalem

In Chapter 3 Isaiah explains how Jerusalem is fast being reduced under its childish king. "It must have taken courage for Isaiah to predict the fall of Jerusalem. It must have felt like treason." Jerusalem, the holy city, inviolate and almost unthreatened since the day David brought to her the ark of the Lord, and destined by the voice of the prophets to be established at the head of the mountains, was now to fall in ruin. But Isaiah is provoked by his knowledge of her sins and intimates her destruction.

> "For Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen; because their tongue and their doings are against Jehovah, to provoke the eyes of His glory. The show of their countenance doth witness against them; and they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not. Woe unto their souls! for they have done evil unto themselves."[15]

Isaiah now turns to the women with a plea. Beware of the eyes of Jehovah. "The glory of God" is burning in them; you cannot hide any of your secret actions from Him. "The Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and Jehovah will lay bare their secret parts."[16] This

[14] Isa.2:19-22
[15] " 3:8-9
[16] Isa.3:17

is what will come to you: "instead of sweet spices there shall be rottenness, and instead of a girdle of rope, and instead of well-set hair baldness, and instead of a stomacher a girding of sackcloth, and branding instead of beauty. Thy men shall fall by the sword, and thy mighty in the war. And her gates shall lament and mourn, and she shall be desolate and sit upon the ground."[17]

Like Amos, Isaiah considers the judgment as unavoidable, but, like Hosea, he sees in the judgment not the end, but the beginning of salvation. From the blackest pessimism shall arise new hope and faith, as from beneath Isaiah's darkest verses there breaks that glorious light of day like uncontrollable spring from the very feet of winter. "For that day shall the spring of Jehovah be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the land shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel."[18] Isaiah's God was a God of justice. That remained that pleases him. The prophet had visions of a better day. "And there shall be a pavilion for a shade in the day-time from the heat, and for a refuge and for a covert from storm and from rain."[19]

Appeal to Vineyard of Judah

In Chapter 5, 1-7, Isaiah paints a picture of great beauty, describing a vineyard visible from Jerusalem. The caretaker had exercised the best of knowledge that a dresser could think of, but it brought forth only wild grapes. He

[17] 3:24-26 [18] 4:2 [19] 4:6

finally decided that all had been done that could possibly be done so he decides to abandon the vineyard: "I will lay it waste; it shall not be pruned nor digged, but there shall come up briers and thorns." (5:6) Judah, as seen from this picture, is the vineyard which has received all the care that any vineyard could receive. Its owner is Yahweh. Its fruits should have been righteousness and justice, but instead the fruits actually yielded were violence and inhumanity. Therefore, says Isaiah, Yahweh will abandon Judah to destruction. This brings to our mind the inevitable doom that Amos so often pictured.

Isaiah appeals to Judah to notice a few of her wild grapes:

1. Love of money and love of wine. Absorption of small properties by wealthy land owners.
2. Moral and spiritual blindness.
3. Disbelief in prophetic teaching, thereby hardening themselves in sin.
4. Self-satisfied astuteness of politicians.
5. Dissolute and corrupt judges. (5:8-24)

Out of these sins Isaiah concludes with an appeal of doom. He calls to his mind the worst things in history and nature. Earthquakes, armed raids, a great battle and the slaughter of a people, prairie and forest fires, civil strife and that famine fever that feeds on itself; battlefields with multitudes slain; a land made desolate by the hungry sea. "For all this His anger is not turned away, but His hand is

stretched out still." A persistent appeal of God's wrath in punishing sin.

Isaiah's Appeal for Trust

Isaiah now begins his career as a statesman. He tries to shape the destines of his country by influencing the politics of his time with his religious ideals. After the accession of Ahaz, hostilities on the part of both Syria and Ephraim against Judah became acute. The great danger was the possibility of the independence of Judah being destroyed by the removal of the native dynasty and the establishment of a creature of the allies on the throne of David (VII[6]). When the news reached Jerusalem of the union of the Syrian with the Ephraimite army, the people became greatly alarmed. Isaiah is commanded by Yahweh to take with him his son, Shear-jashub, whose name signifies "A Remnant-shall-return." Isaiah was alive to the grave political dangers which would result from placing the country in a position of servitude to the Assyrian Empire. He also believed it was useless for Judah to make any advances in that direction. The prophet believes that the highest interests at stake were not political. Isaiah was instructed to meet Ahaz outside the city in the "Fuller's Field Road"; he is to appeal to the King to keep calm, and to assure him that Syria and Ephraim possess no power to do Judah serious mischief, or to carry out their plan of taking Jerusalem and overthrowing the Davidic dynasty in favor of a foreign

nation. "The crisis presented itself to him (Isaiah) as a test of the religious mind of the people, of its capacity for exercising that fearless trust in Jehovah's word which alone could guide it safely through the complications of the immediate future to the felicity that lies beyond."[20]

As Isaiah appeals to Ahaz he tells him that lack of trust in Yahweh will surely lead to Judah's destruction. The great object of this encounter with Ahaz is to influence the King to place his trust in the help of God. When Ahaz was trembling with fear at the approach of two Kings, Isaiah says, "Take heed, and be quiet; fear not, neither let thy heart be faint." (7:4). The battle cry of Isaiah was "Gott mit uns," with us is God. "Behold a Virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."[21] 'Immanu-el. We have with us, in our own Yahweh of Hosts, El, the one Supreme God, Ruler of heaven and earth.' Trust in Jehovah. This is what Isaiah appeals for, but Ahaz will not listen.

Appeal to People

Although the King will not listen, Isaiah will appeal to the people. G.A.Smith says,[22] "This appeal from monarch to people is one of the most characteristic features of Isaiah's ministry.... And however much he may be able to charge national disaster upon the folly of politicians or the obduracy of a King, it is the people whom he holds ultimately responsible.

[20] Skinner, Cambridge Bible, P.50

[21] Isa.7:14b

[22] The Book of Isaiah, P.117

Before the fall of Damascus (732 B.C), Isaiah is commanded of Yahweh in two different ways to show his conviction of the approaching fate of Damascus and Samaria. He writes down in the presence of witnesses the word 'Maher-shalal-hash-baz (spoil is speedy plunder hasteneth) or (Speed-spoil-hurry-prey). Sometime later he names one of his sons by the same name, expressing the alarm of a couple of invasions: "For before the child shall have knowledge to cry, my father, and, my mother, the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria shall be carried away before the King of Assyria."[23]

The people of Judah are utterly materialized; their delights have been in gold and silver, chariots and horses, fenced cities and broad streams, and their faith has followed their delight. Isaiah shows them that these things to which they flee will only help to destroy them. The great River, whose many waters they covet, will overflow them: "The King of Assyria and all his glory, and he shall rise above all his channels and go over all his banks; and he shall sweep onward unto Judah; he shall overflow and pass through; he shall reach even to the neck; and the stretching out of his wings shall fill the breadth of thy land, O Immanuel, thou who art God-with-us (7,8). Amid all the possible alliances and all the possible fears of a complex political situation, God remains the one certain alliance, the one real fear. "Say ye not, a conspiracy, concerning all whereof this people say, a conspi-

[23] 8:4

racy; neither fear ye this fear, nor be in dread thereof. Yahweh of Hosts, Him shall ye sanctify; and let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread."(8:12).

An Appeal for Temperance

Isaiah pictures in Chapter 28 a situation that is not difficult for us to understand. There are certain conditions that are found which have come out of luxury and intemperance in the land. The eyes of politicans and private men were so fevered by sin that they could not see [illegible] beauty in simple purity. The minds were so filled with knowledge or intoxicated with their own cleverness that they paid no attention to religious instructions at all.

People in Northern Israel must have been hard drinkers. They had found contentment in their drinks and the land that was so filled with pleasures. But the glory of sunny Ephraim is as the first ripe fig a man findeth, and "while it is yet in his hand, he eateth it up." God shall sweep away all drunken magnates and flowers of the rich, but there shall remain a remnant who will be able to abide through the storm. Jehovah Himself shall be "a spirit of justice to him that sitteth for justice, and for strength to them that turn back the battle at the gate."[24]

Doom and destruction lifts itself again in the appeal of Isaiah but he is trying to show how gloriously purity shines above that which is immoral. He points out the dangers of

[24] 28:6

luxury and indulgence through this message of doom in order to rouse in his people a sense of moral admiration. It was not the method of the prophet Isaiah to crush men beneath the fear of judgment, without revealing to them through this message the possibilities of obtaining victorious virtue.

Seemingly, the men whom he addressed were too deep in sin to be roused by this prophetic appeal. 'Even priest and prophet stagger through strong drink, and through wine they are swallowed up, they stagger with strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment."[25] As Isaiah appeals to them they turn with mockery, crying out, "Whom is he going to teach knowledge, and upon whom is he trying to force 'the Message,' as he calls it? Them that are weaned from the milk and drawn from the breasts?"[26] Saying, in other words, are we minors that he teaches us with his simple repetitions - "Precept upon precept and precept upon precept, line upon line and line upon line, here a little and there a little?"[27]

"But Isaiah turns upon them with their own words: 'You call me, Stammerer! I tell you that God, who speaks through me, and whom in me you mock, will one day speak again to you in a tongue that shall indeed sound stammering to you. When these far-off barbarians have reached your walls, and over them taunt you in uncouth tones, they shall be the very voice of Him, and as He threatens you with captivity it shall be your bitterness to remember how by me He once offered you a

[25] 28:7,8 [26] 28:9 [27] 28:10

rest and refreshing, which you refused. I tell you more. God will not only speak in words, but in deeds, and then truly your nickname for His message shall be fulfilled to you. Then shall the word of the Lord be unto you precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line, here a little and there a little. For God shall speak with the terrible simplicity and slowness of deeds, with the gradual growth of fate, with the monotonous stages of decay, till step by step you go, and stumble backwards and be broken, and snared and taken. You have scorned my instruction as monosyllables fit for children! By irritating monosyllables of gradual penalty shall God instruct you the second time.'"[28]

What a beautiful picture showing how God speaks twice to me, first in words, then in deeds! If we ignore the former we must suffer the latter. God speaks daily in the simple terms of faithfulness, honor, and purity. The theme of this appeal was to seek after these things.

Appeal of Hope

There appears in Isaiah for the first time in Israelite prophecy the picture of the coming of a new time - that of the Messiah. This strong expectation of a King who shall rule in justice indicated the extent of his faith and hope. Some scholars argue that Isaiah did not introduce this idea. It was the popular belief of his day. Nevertheless, he took this national belief, purged it of selfish nationalism and made it

[28] G.A.Smith, Isaiah, P.158

the vehicle of a lofty idealism. Here it is that the real significance of his visions of the future is to be found. The particular forms under which he conceived this Kingdom, noble as they are, were not final. Isaiah with this appeal says that God had greater things in store for Judah for the ages to come. But out of the trunk of the Judaean oak Isaiah sees springing up a fair and powerful Branch.

> "And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, and a branch out of his roots shall bear fruit. And the spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Jehovah." [29]

Gray says "the poem predicts the restoration of the Jewish monarchy in the person of a King sprung from the family of Jesse, the father of David, who will be equipped by Yahweh's spirit for all the duties of a righteous ruler. Thus equipped, he will in his might achieve it, securing for the weak what is due to them and smiting down the powerful who do wrong. All that he does will be done in righteousness and faithfulness... All men will live together in peace and fellowship." [30]

What a beautiful appeal of hope! Why worry about the injustice of these earthly Kings and rulers? There shall come one who shall rule in justice. With Dr. Knudson we may say Isaiah was looking for "a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." This message must have kindled in the hearts of the true followers of God a hope that could never be destroyed. For after all much of life's pain

[29] 11:1-4 [30] I.C.C., Isaiah, P.213

and struggle are forgotten when we become conscious that a better day is coming.

Appeal for Faith in Yahweh

Faith was always Isaiah's guiding principle. In accordance with this spiritual law, "If ye have not faith, verily ye shall not endure" (7.9b); the only appeal which the prophet used in the crisis of the Syro-Ephraimitic campaign, and again in the critical years of 704-702 was that of "refraining from action and trusting (in God)." Isaiah developed the idea more fully and forcibly than any other prophet. He made it clear that trust in God meant righteous government for a nation (28:16,17). As the prophet had appealed to Ahaz for faith in Jehovah he likewise pleaded with Hezekiah, when the Assyrian yoke became heavy, appealing to Egypt for relief. Dr. Knudson has called him "The Prophet of Faith." In the midst of political confusion he appealed for faith in God. "Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, behold I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone of sure foundation: he that believeth shall not be in haste."(28:16) Adding a little later: "By sitting still and resting shall ye be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength. And ye would not" (30:15). Perhaps in 690 B.C. an embassy from Ethiopia came to Jerusalem, evidently for the purpose of inducing Judah to join in war against Assyria. The time seems to have been critical. Terror and confusion spread abroad.

Isaiah remained calm and undisturbed, and sent the ambassadors away with the assurance that he saw no occasion for alarm. "For thus hath Jehovah said unto me, I will be still, and I will look on in my dwelling place, like clear heat in sunshine, like a cloud of dew in the heat of harvest." (18:4) The only thing for Judah to do was to place her trust in the hands of her God. Isaiah preached this gospel out of a deep religious experience that had come to him. Throughout all his messages of doom, or any other type, this appeal of faith in Yahweh encircles them all.

SUMMARY

Isaiah had the chance to be more effective with his prophetic appeal than any of the other prophets before his time. Since he associated with kings and other political officials, he had the great opportunity of preaching his doctrines of religious ideals. He did not fail to take advantage of this privilege. He followed in the footsteps of his predecessors in appealing with the message of God's wrath and doom upon all sin and evil, but following in the footsteps of Amos, he advocated that a "remnant" shall return and be saved. Isaiah appeals for an awakened conscience in men. Conscience with him is a thoroughfare by which the Lord drives the man out upon the world and the world's manifold need of him. When the conscience shall have awakened to the knowledge of God, justice, relieving the oppressed, judging the fatherless, and

pleading for the widow will follow. Isaiah believes that God does not make his presence through magic, but through rational and moral methods. He appeals to the proud and lofty, telling them that the high towers, fenced walls, and the hills lifted by man's imagination will be bowed down. "Jehovah alone shall be exalted in that day." God will destroy that which does not please him.

Like Amos, Isaiah considers the judgment unavoidable but, like Hosea, he sees in the judgment not the end, but the beginning of salvation. From the blackest pessimism shall arise new hope and faith.

The people of Judah had put their trust in material things. Isaiah shows them that these things to which they flee will only help to destroy them. Amid all the possible alliances and all the possible fears of a complex political situation, God remains the one certain alliance, the one real fear. Isaiah makes a strong appeal for trust in Jehovah.

The prophet announces the coming of a king who shall rule in justice, indicating the extent of his faith and hope. Why worry about the injustice of these earthly kings? There shall come one who shall rule in justice. Have hope and trust in Jehovah, but at the same time keep his moral laws.

The message of Isaiah was an appeal of faith, hope, and trust in the God of Holiness, a God who revealed himself through rational and moral principles.

CHAPTER VI

MICAH

Micah was a prophetic contemporary of Isaiah. He was from the ancient town of Moresheth on the border of the Philistine plain. He was far less significant in his day than Isaiah. The latter was a great spiritual leader, pointing out through his message the great spiritual truths that God had revealed to him, and applying them to the political world of his day. Isaiah spent his ministry among the aristocratic and ruling classes, and "sought to gather around him a body of disciples who would gradually leaven the governing circles with a spirit of faith." But Micah was just the opposite. He was a rough countryman. His speech was not polished with the literary style as that of Isaiah. He spoke in simple homely speech straight to the hearts of the masses. He appealed to champion the welfare of the poor. In defending the fact that Micah did not deal with politics, Thorn says, "Though the occasion of his preaching appears to have been the advance of Sennacherib's army - the crisis which called forth all the powers of Isaiah's far-sighted statesmanship - Micah did not deal at all with the political issues involved. For him the approaching danger was simply a call to national repentance, and that meant a demand for immediate and radical social reform."[1]

[1]Prophets of Israel, P.76

Micah possessed a wonderful imagination. He must have received it from his background of country life. He makes a beautiful picture of the grand entry of Yahweh into the arena of Judah's life:

> "For behold, Jehovah cometh forth out of his place, and will come down, and tread upon the high places of the earth. And the mountains shall be melted under him, and the valleys shall be cleft, as wax before the fire, as waters that are poured down a steep place."[2]

Wade, in speaking of this great imaginary picture, says[3] that this descent is one accomplished by a violent thunderstorm (Ex.19:18), causing landslides on the hills (like the melting of wax, Ps.97:5; Isa.64:1,3) and rifts in the valley (like the effects of a cataract). We are reminded of Amos at this point when we think of how he used his rugged shepherd-life background in the expression of his prophetic appeal.

The Times of Micah

That Micah prophesied in the days of Hezekiah is affirmed in Jer.26:18,19, where Micah 3:12 is quoted. Consequently the political, social, moral and religious conditions during the prophetic career of Micah were essentially the same as the conditions reflected in the prophecies of his contemporary Isaiah.[4] Although the two prophets lived during the same period, they viewed the situation from different standpoints. Isaiah was closely allied to those in political life and was a man of the city; Micah was an humble peasant and put his plea in for the common man, or what we call today "The For-

[2]Mic.1:3-5 [3]Isa.P.4 [4]See Ch.5

gotton Man." Like all the other prophets he believed that prosperity was dangerous. They reasoned this from the prosperous reign of Uzziah which had produced an increase in luxury and a powerful capitalist class. They were not satisfied merely with getting rich but materialism had dominated their minds to the extent that they lived in the thoughts day and night of depriving the poor of their substance. To these Micah appeals, expressing the anger of God: "Woe to them that devise iniquity, and work evil upon their beds when the morning is light, they practice it, because it is in the power of their land. And they covet fields, and seize them; and houses, and take them away: and they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage."[5] This period of prosperity had led to serious social conditions and we shall bring them out as we attempt to outline the prophet's appeal.

Appeal to Rulers for Justice

Those who were in power instead of defending the poor helped to oppress them. In the eyes of the prophet probably they did not know that they were supposed to know justice. They completely exploited the poor and yet had the nerve to cry unto Jehovah thinking that he would hear them, but Micah speaks out: "And I said, Hear, I pray you, ye heads of Jacob, and rulers of the house of Israel: is it not for you to know justice? ye who hate the good and love the evil; who pluck off their skin from off them, and their flesh from off their

[5]Mic.2:1,2

bones; who also eat the flesh of my people, and flay their skin from off them, and break their bones, and chop them in pieces, as for the pot, and as flesh within the caldron. Then shall they cry unto Jehovah, but he will not hide his face from them at that time, according as they have wrought evil in their doings."[6]

Doom for 'False Prophets'

The most pathetic picture of all the conditions Micah faced was that of the preachers. They received their support from the rich and powerful, and turned their preaching to please the ears of those who supported them. They were absolutely blinded to the social needs and dared not attack evil because they did not want to offend those who were supporting them. A spirit of indignation must have arisen in Micah here. He spoke out like a thunder against them: "Therefore it shall be night unto you, that ye shall have no vision; and it shall be dark unto you, that ye shall not divine; and the sun shall go down upon the prophets, and the day shall be black over them. And the seer shall be put to shame, and the diviners confounded; yea, they shall all cover their lips; for there is no answer of God."[7]

Appeal Against Child Labor

Micah was the first of the prophets of the eighth century to protest against child labor.

[6] 3:1-4 [7] 3:6,7

"Woe to those who plot iniquity,
And devise evil even in bed.
In the light of the morning they execute it,
Because it is in the power of their hands.
. . . . . .
The women of my people you drive away
From the homes which they loved,
From their children you take away
My glory for ever and ever." - Micah 2:1,9.

The greed of the rich had caused them to take women with their babes and use them as slaves. The little children lost the dignity and sacredness of their childhood. What a pathetic sight to see little girls and boys work in factories or on farms all the day for a few pennies a day! The prophet saw this terrible condition and realized the dangers it had for the future generation; thus he spoke in an appeal for the preservation of the sacredness of childhood.

Comfort to Righteous

Micah did not believe that his prophetic appeals would be sufficient to bring about a complete transformation in national life. He could see that the majority would continue in rebellion, therefore, punishment would come to destroy the national life of Israel and Judah. The prophet also saw that a remnant would be saved and this remnant would enjoy a life of permanent peace and brotherhood under an ideal ruler. Thus he appeals to the righteous to not become discouraged for a glorious future was in store for them. "They shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig-tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of Jehovah of hosts hath

spoken it."[8] We have here a corresponding belief with Isaiah that the Kingdom of God would ultimately triumph in the world. Those who have been obedient to God will have this enjoyment of peace, healing, redemption, and blessing. What a beautiful lesson for this day, as George Adam Smith states it, "We have first religion, the centre and origin of all, compelling the attention of men by its historical evidence of justice and righteousness. We have the world's willingness to learn it. We have the results in the widening brotherhood of nations, in universal peace, in labor freed from war, and with none of her resources absorbed by the conscriptions and armaments which in our times are deemed necessary for enforcing peace. We have the universal diffusion and security of property, the prosperity and safety of the humblest home. And, finally, we have this free strength and wealth inspired by the example of God Himself to nourish the broken and to gather in the far-wandered."[9] What a standard of ideals for us first revealed from Mount Zion! In having the King as ruler, there shall be no favoritism. He will be able to be Priest and brother to all classes, high and low, rich and poor, the noble and peasant alike.

SUMMARY

The speech of Micah was not polished with the literary style as was that of Isaiah. He appealed to champion the

[8] 4:4 [9] The Twelve Prophets, P.405

welfare of the poor. He did not deal with political issues. For him the approaching danger was simply a call to national repentance and that meant a demand for immediate and radical social reform. He protested against preachers who were receiving their support from the rich and powerful, and turning their preaching to please the ears of those who supported them. The pathetic sight of child labor aroused his indignation and he spoke out against such. The whole social order of his day had a tendency to give to the rich and those in power all the enjoyments possible, while the poor and underprivileged were exploited on the other hand. Such a social order could not stand. The need, as Micah saw it, was for a reform in the social order so that these conditions will not prevail. Micah did not believe that his prophetic appeal would be sufficient to bring about a complete transformation in national life. He could see that the majority would remain in sin, but the prophet also saw that a remnant would be saved and this remnant would enjoy a life of permanent peace and brotherhood under an ideal leader. The message of Micah was an appeal of social reform. His was an appeal to social justice.

A Comprehensive Study of the Appeal of the Prophets

The prophets of the eighth-century feel themselves standing face to face with a marvelous theophany. God is about to reveal himself as the righteous judge of the world. This element is present in the appeal of each prophet. God had been the righteous judge before, but his dealings with men had not always been so clear that they could discern the principle by which he was guided. In the great day about to dawn, this unclearness is to disappear, and God is to stand before men as the one living embodiment of righteousness and judgment. All iniquity is to be overthrown, and a new kingdom founded on right and truth is to be established. Righteousness was conceived by the prophets as both objective and subjective, both social and individual. Some laid more stress on one aspect, and some on another, but all agreed in their conception of the essential nature of righteousness. It meant social justice, it meant personal purity, it meant clean heart as well as right conduct. All the prophets appealed for social justice. This element was more pronounced in the appeal of Amos. "Let justice," says Amos, "roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream." "Seek justice," says Isaiah, "relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow." Hosea appeals for personal purity which will find expression in the dealings of men in the social order. Micah appeals for justice to the poor.

The most striking thing about the eighth-century prophets is their teaching concerning the day of Yahweh. In that day soon to dawn the evils of the present order are to cease. God is to establish his own kingdom among men. He had given them laws, and sent them prophets. He had punished them time and time again and in many various ways for their sins. After visitation he was forced to say, "Yet have ye not returned unto me." The appeal of Amos was the expression of a doom surpassing anything known in the past. It was through the fear of this great impending catastrophe that the strength of his prophetic appeal rested. Hosea also saw the impending doom because of the flagrant sins of his day, but his heart was greatly moved by the thought of it. As he sees the sins around him his heart is torn with grief. His marriage experience has revealed to him the nature of God's love: a love that is not cancelled by human sin. He only used his appeal of doom to arouse the people, for his message was an appeal to return to a still loving father. Like Amos, Isaiah considers the judgment unavoidable but, like Hosea, he sees in the judgment not the end, but the beginning of salvation. From the blackest pessimism shall arise new hope and faith. A new kingdom will be established over which an ideal king will reign. Only have faith, hope and trust in the majestic Jehovah--this was his appeal. Micah also saw the doom but for him the approaching danger was simply a call to national repentance

that meant a demand for immediate and radical social reform. A new social order would be established in which there will be no exploitation of the poor and underprivileged. The prophets appealed to a religious knowledge which the nations possessed, but did not rightly use. It was their purpose to bring the nations back to God through appeals of Fear, Love, Faith and Trust, and individual purity.

The Prophetic Appeal in Light of Today

The prophets of Israel possess more than an historical interest for us. They gave to the world eternal truths which are as vitally important for our day as well as for theirs. Naturally, our age seems far remote from theirs, but in many respects there is a striking similarity between the conditions which were present then and those which we have to face in our own day. Those of us who have to preach to a world filled with its political, social, and moral problems can easily find in the appeals of the prophets a perennial fount of guidance and inspiration. These men like master physicians diagnosed the cases of their day, went to the very roots of the ailments and prescribed that which they thought Yahweh demanded. They had no regard for position or public opinion, but spoke the truth as they saw it, sometimes enduring untold persecution. These men still hold for our day profound religious truths and lofty spiritual ideals which are the supreme guides of the world.

They expressed their convictions without fear. We need men today like Micah and his fellow prophets who are able to see the facts and dare to speak the truth about them, in the name of God and in scorn of consequences. Men who will speak out against a society which allows the rich and middle class to prosper at the expense of the poor, as Micah called

them 'False Prophets' who absolutely ignored flagrant iniquities around them in fear of not getting their physical support. We need this appeal for true prophets today.

"God send us men alert and quick
His lofty precepts to translate,
Until the laws of Christ become
The laws and habits of the State.

God send us men! God send us men!
Patient, courageous, strong and true;
With vision clear and mind equipped,
His will to learn, His work to do."
F. J. Gillman.

There are always those who think that, because they live in prosperity and comfort, all is well. There are always those who estimate a nation's welfare by the extent of its commerce, the power of its army, the strength of its navy, the number of its colonies and dependencies. Let such ideals prevail, and the seeds of a terrible harvest of judgment are certainly sown. The wealth of a nation is in the well-being of the people, the happiness and contentment of their homes, the purity of their family life, the integrity of their character. If any nation or community comes to think otherwise, it will inevitably find itself brought into collision with the absolute righteousness of God and borne down before it. Moral issues finally determine the course of history. This was the claim the Prophets made, and it has been vindicated on a fairly larger scale than they could ever imagine.

Of Amos Dr. Kirkpatrick says: "The Book of Amos teaches with singular clearness and force truth which can never become superfluous or obsolete. The truths that justice between man and man is one of the divine foundations of society; that privilege implies responsibility, and that failure to recognize responsibility will surely bring punishment; that nations, and by analogy, individuals, are bound to live up to that measure of light and knowledge which has been granted to them; that the most elaborate worship is but an insult to God when offered by those who have no mind to conform their wills and conduct to his requirements; these are elementary but eternal truths."[10]

What a beautiful lesson for today from Hosea's message of love! The infinite love of God is like our poor finite human love in that it can be rejected. And to reject the love of God is to sever the cord which draws us out of the abyss of evil and lifts us to the realm of light and peace.

> "He that shuts love out, in turn shall be
> Shut out from love, and in her threshold
> Howling in outer darkness."

In our modern day when we are brought face to face with the sordidness of political intrigue, or the bitterness of the conflict between class and class, or the appalling horror of a world at war, we need the vision of "the Lord sitting upon the throne and lifted up."

[10] Doctrine of the Prophets, P.106

The prophetic appeals of the prophets in light of today glow with more brilliancy than ever before. As we look about us and see the richest nation in the world in the midst of economic chaos and materialism that blows away like the autumn leaves, we can appreciate more fully the spiritual import of the eighth century prophets.

SUMMARY

CHAPTER I

The prophet was a man of God, a servant of God, or a messenger of Jehovah. He was sometimes called interpreter, a man who interpreted to Israel God's ways. "Sons of the Prophets" are persons endowed with the spirit of the prophets, not at all sons of the prophets according to flesh. Ecstatic prophecy was the utterance of noises and sounds which might be unrecognizable as human speech. Sometimes the limbs were stimulated to violent action, a wild leaping and contortions resulted. If definite words were uttered they were very often unintelligible. It was the duty of the prophet to reveal the will and purpose of God to men, and to interpret that will and purpose in the light and circumstances of his day. Prophecy was an established order similar to that of the priesthood. To the prophets the people went for instruction and guidance both in public and private affairs. The appearance of literary prophecy marks the most important epoch in Israel's history next to that of Moses. The eighth-century B.C. has special importance in the history of Israel; for it was that century that gave to the world the prophecy of Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah.

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CHAPTER II

The authenticity of Amos has been seriously questioned. There are beliefs that certain parts of the book are later additions. There is a question whether Amos 9:8c-15 represents the genuine teaching of the prophet. The objections to attributing these verses to Amos seem to outweigh the arguments in favor of Amos's authorship. Thus we are not including these passages in our study.

The mention of Judah in Hosea 1:17; 5:13; 6:11; 8:14 and 10:11 is clearly foreign to the original connection, and consequently of secondary origin. The mention of Judah is due to the work of a Judaistic editor. The criticism of the passages referring to Israel's future rests on completely false premises. The criticism of chapter 14 is also rejected because one characteristic of the writing of Hosea is that it does not always follow logical sequence.

The non-authentic parts of the book of Isaiah are 13:1-14; 23; 24-27; 34-35; 36-39. Modern critics agree that these passages lack a suitable occasion in Isaiah's age and they do not follow his literary style. Chapters 40-55 have been assigned to a writer called "Deutero-Isaiah," one who wrote toward the close of the Babylonian captivity. Chapters 56-66 have been ascribed to a "Trito-Isaiah," to be distinguished from Deutero-Isaiah, who wrote shortly before the

advent of Ezra and Nehemiah.

Modern critics regard Micah 7:7-20 of a later date, this portion being a canto of several fragments, from periods far apart in the history of Israel. There is not enough reason to take from Micah the authorship of 6:1-7. The prophet lived through a period during which political as well as moral and social changes were frequent. With J.M.P.Smith we do not believe Chapters 4 and 5 were written by Micah.

CHAPTER III

The environment of Amos no doubt had a decided influence on his prophetic appeal. The shepherd life made him courageous. He was familiar with stern discipline. His God was a God of power. With this strong instrument of the power of God in his hand, Amos preached with a strong prophetic appeal of fear. In the mad haste after riches, luxury of city life, exploitation of the poor, immoral worship, and self-satisfaction and self-conceit, the nations had forgotten God's everlasting laws. There was no hope for salvation. Doom was inevitable. No one would escape. The message of Amos is an explanation of the destruction coming to Israel and the surrounding nations. It was an appeal of Fear.

CHAPTER IV

The marriage of Hosea to a woman whom he greatly loved and the breaking up of his home through his wife's unfaithfulness certainly influenced the appeal of his message. The

home life of Hosea kindled the spark for his prophetic message and gave it the necessary sympathetical effect that is needed in order to make men feel it. The love he had for Gomer reminded him of the love God had for Israel. When Gomer sinned Hosea forgave her; when Israel sinned God was willing to forgive her too. Hosea appeals to Israel's worshippers, priests, those who oppress the poor, those who had no knowledge of God, and those who had sinned against God in any form to return to Jehovah who was willing to forgive and to love. His appeal was a sympathetic plea for repentance and return to a still loving father. In other words his was an appeal of Love.

CHAPTER V

Isaiah is the most distinguished of the eighth-century prophets. He exercised a commanding influence in the political world of his day. In his vision of God in the temple he got a conception of the majesty and holiness of Jehovah that went with him throughout his whole ministry. The God of Isaiah reasons with men. He does not make his presence through magic and lightning, but through rational and moral methods. God will destroy the proud and lofty. He will be exalted in that day. Isaiah considers the judgment unavoidable but sees in the judgment not the end, but the beginning of salvation. There shall come an ideal government to those who follow the ways of righteousness. Men must have faith and patience and put their trust in Jehovah. Men had put their trust in things

and men, but Jehovah, and only Jehovah, shall be exalted. The message of Isaiah was an appeal for faith and trust in the Almighty.

CHAPTER VI

Micah was a prophetic contemporary of Isaiah. He was a rough countryman who spoke in simple and homely speech straight to the hearts of the masses. He appealed to champion the welfare of the poor. He warned the nation of the dangers that came through prosperity. He spoke out against child-labor. He hurled a blow against those who preached to please those who were possessed with great riches. His message was an appeal for Social Reform.

The prophets of the eighth-century gave to the world religious ideals that our modern preacher can always use in meeting the great problems of our social order. The power of convictions these men had certainly should increase our desire to preach that which we believe to be right as God gives us power to see right.

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